

Advanced Higher Business Management Draft Course/Unit Support Notes



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this document for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Advanced Higher Business Management Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Course Assessment Specification* and the *Unit Specifications* for the Units in the Course.

These support notes cover both the Advanced Higher Course and the Units in it.

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General guidance on the Course/Units

Aims

At Advanced Higher level, Business Management provides learners an understanding of effective management of business in a national and global context that will enable them to interpret, predict and explain business decisions and actions.

The aims of the Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ enhance the skills of independent learning, research, critical analysis and problem solving in a business context
- ◆ apply business and management concepts and theories to draw conclusions
- ◆ assess the social, ethical and global factors that affect local, national and multinational organisations
- ◆ analyse and evaluate leadership, management and motivation theories
- ◆ investigate a range of research and analysis models used to assist in managing change
- ◆ critically assess a range of management techniques used to assist in effective planning and decision making at a strategic level

At Advanced Higher level, the contexts of study are complex and challenging, particularly in terms of the application of business concepts and management theories to current business situations. Undertaking this Course will require a more sophisticated level of communication skills, as learners are required to interpret complex business information, to discuss current business issues and to present logical and reasoned explanations and discussions related to these issues.

Development of research and investigative skills is a key focus of this Course. These skills encourage independent learning and the use of initiative, and also provide opportunities for team working. The Course gives learners an in-depth understanding of the global nature of business, the internal and external factors that affect business success, and how large organisations are managed and react to change.

Advanced Higher Business Management is, therefore, instrumental in developing learners' higher-order thinking skills.

Progression

In order to do this Course, learners should have achieved the Higher Business Management Course.

Learners who have achieved this Advanced Higher Course may progress to further study, employment and/or training. Opportunities for progression include:

- ◆ Progression to other SQA qualifications:
 - Progression to other qualifications at the same level of the Course, for example Professional Development Awards (PDAs) , Higher National Certificates (HNCs)

- ◆ Progression to further/higher education:
 - For many learners, a key transition point will be to further or higher education, for example to Higher National Certificates (HNCs)/Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degree programmes. Examples of further and higher education programmes that learners doing the Course might progress to are Accountancy, Business Administration, Hospitality and Tourism Management, HR Management, Marketing, International Business, Financial Management and Economics.

 - Advanced Higher Courses provide good preparation for learners progressing to further and higher education as learners doing Advanced Higher Courses must be able to work with more independence and less supervision. This eases their transition to further/higher education. Advanced Higher Courses may also allow 'advanced standing' or partial credit towards the first year of study of a degree programme.

 - Advanced Higher Courses are challenging and testing qualifications — learners who have achieved multiple Advanced Higher Courses are regarded as having a proven level of ability which attests to their readiness for higher education in Higher Education Institutions in other parts of the UK as well as in Scotland.

- ◆ Progression to employment:
 - For many learners, progression will be directly to employment or work-based training programmes. Employment opportunities and training programmes are available in a wide range of trainee management functions within the private, public and third sectors.

This Advanced Higher is part of the Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences. The Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences consist of coherent groups of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. Each award consists of two Advanced Highers, one Higher and an Interdisciplinary Project which adds breadth and value and helps learners to develop generic skills, attitudes and confidence that will help them make the transition into higher education or employment.

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured progression involving two or more SCQF levels.

This Advanced Higher Course is not in a hierarchy with the corresponding Higher Course or its Units.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The development of subject specific and generic skills is central to the Course. Learners should be made aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. It is the transferability that will help learners with further study and enhance their personal effectiveness.

The table below shows where there are likely to be opportunities to develop mandatory skills in or across the Units. However, the delivery mode adopted and the approaches to learning and teaching will determine how and where the opportunities arise.

Mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding	The External Business Environment	The Internal Business Environment	Researching a Business
applying management concepts to real life business contexts	✓	✓	✓
decision making by applying a range of strategic planning methods to complex business situations	✓	✓	✓
analysing and evaluating a range of techniques to manage change in the current business environment		✓	✓
understanding and evaluating a range of schools of management thought in current business contexts		✓	

analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of motivational theories		✓	✓
analysing and assessing the different skills needed for effective leadership in different business contexts		✓	✓
understanding the impact that external agencies can have on business	✓		
understanding the impact of business at home and in an international context	✓		
examining the use of emerging technology and how it can be used to aid business	✓		

Other skills developed	
Analytical and evaluative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interpreting a wide range of business information drawn from a variety of sources ◆ Drawing well justified conclusions about business performance and potential ◆ Using conclusions from analysis of dynamic business situations to devise appropriate recommendations ◆ Developing the ability to evaluate the relevance and limitations of business theory when examining actual, complex business situations
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Developing skills in face-to-face, oral and written communication ◆ Gathering and interpreting information from a wide variety of sources ◆ Using IT to conduct field and desk research, enhance learning, and produce well-constructed evidence of findings/demonstrate attainment ◆ Developing the logical thinking and interpersonal skills needed to function as an effective team member
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Developing the ability to identify and/or foresee business issues or problems, and create and justify tactical and/or strategic solutions to these ◆ Interpreting and evaluating information in order to draw conclusions which will assist with decision making ◆ Accepting personal responsibility to use initiative and be self-motivated
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Developing the ability to plan and carry out relevant and robust research ◆ Using a wide range of research techniques and sources to capture information ◆ Developing flexibility in adjusting research tactics to pursue less readily available information

For more information see Appendix 1.

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Approaches to learning and teaching

Advanced Higher Courses place more demands on learners as there will be a higher proportion of independent study and less direct supervision. Some of the approaches to learning and teaching suggested for other levels (in particular, Higher) may also apply at Advanced Higher level but there will be a stronger emphasis on independent learning.

For Advanced Higher Courses, a significant amount of learning may be self-directed and require learners to demonstrate a more mature approach to learning and the ability to work on their own initiative. This can be very challenging for some learners, who may feel isolated at times, and teachers and lecturers should have strategies for addressing this. These could include, for example, planning time for regular feedback sessions/discussions on a one-to-one basis and on a group basis led by the teacher or lecturer (where appropriate).

Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning. Learners should also be given the opportunity to practise and develop research and investigation skills and higher order evaluation and analytical skills. The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can make a significant contribution to the development of these higher order skills as research and investigation activities become more sophisticated.

Learners will engage in a variety of learning activities as appropriate to the subject, for example:

- ◆ researching information for their subject rather than receiving information from their teacher or lecturer
- ◆ using active and open-ended learning activities such as research, case studies and presentation tasks, for example using multinational businesses to contextualise learning
- ◆ making use of the internet to draw conclusions about specific issues
- ◆ engaging in wide-ranging independent reading
- ◆ recording, in a systematic way, the results of research and independent investigation from different sources
- ◆ presenting findings/conclusions of research and investigation activities in a presentation
- ◆ participating in group work with peers and using collaborative learning opportunities to develop team working
- ◆ participating in informed debate and discussion with peers where they can demonstrate skills in constructing and sustaining lines of argument to provide challenge and enjoyment, breadth, and depth to learning
- ◆ drawing conclusions from complex information
- ◆ using sophisticated written and/or oral communication and presentation skills to present information

- ◆ using appropriate technological resources, eg web-based resources
- ◆ using appropriate media resources, eg video clips
- ◆ demonstrating development, improvement and refinement of techniques and practices in practical/performance-based subjects
- ◆ using real-life contexts and experiences familiar and relevant to young people to meaningfully hone and exemplify skills, knowledge and understanding
- ◆ participating in field trips and visits

Teachers and lecturers should support learners by having regular discussions with them and giving regular feedback. Some learning and teaching activities may be carried out on a group basis and, where this applies, learners could also receive feedback from their peers.

Teachers and lecturers should, where possible, provide opportunities to personalise learning for learners, and to enable them to have choices in approaches to learning and teaching. The flexibility in Advanced Higher Courses and the independence with which learners carry out the work lend themselves to this. Teachers and lecturers should also create opportunities for, and use, inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies which suit the needs of all learners. Innovative and creative ways of using technology can also be valuable in creating inclusive learning and teaching approaches.

Centres are free to sequence the teaching of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course in any order they wish. For example:

- ◆ Each Unit could be delivered separately in any sequence.

Or:

- ◆ All Units may be delivered in a combined way as part of the Course. If this approach is used, the Outcomes within Units may either be partially or fully combined.

There may be opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts in this Course. This could be done through mini-projects or case studies. For example, researching a Scottish multinational company and/or preparing a case study relating to a Scottish multinational company.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work should be developed in this Course.

Literacy

- ◆ Reading and assimilating case study material and organising information from it appropriately to answer questions
- ◆ Writing structured responses to questions in Unit and Course assessments
- ◆ Presenting and critically analysing findings from research in a structured format
- ◆ Listening to and interpreting oral information, eg from presentations, conversations, audio or audio-visual sources
- ◆ Reading material from a wide variety of media, eg newspapers, books, the internet, business documents
- ◆ Communicating orally through individual or group presentations, tasks, discussions, debates and interviews

Numeracy

- ◆ Carrying out calculations, eg when evaluating financial information in order to analyse performance or determine future strategies
- ◆ Gathering numerical information from a wide range of sources, presenting it graphically, and analysing its significance
- ◆ Interpreting and extracting information from tables, charts, graphs or diagrams to help make informed decisions

Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- ◆ Increasing understanding of how business organisations work in a global context
- ◆ Applying an understanding of the principles of effective management in a range of different contexts
- ◆ Accepting personal responsibility for learning, leading to greater self-reliance and autonomy
- ◆ Using initiative to set personal targets, be proactive rather than reactive
- ◆ Growing in confidence through undertaking personal research in a variety of contexts
- ◆ Gaining experience of the world of work, eg by interacting directly with local business organisations and becoming aware of potential career paths
- ◆ Acquiring and improving IT skills for a technology-driven society
- ◆ Working with others in a variety of different tasks and situations,
- ◆ Being an active member of a team, and gaining an understanding of team dynamics and the factors affecting team performance
- ◆ Using initiative and innovation and displaying creativity, flexibility and resourcefulness, for example when proposing solutions to business problems and strategies for the future

- ◆ Acquiring effective time management skills

Thinking skills

- ◆ Using business vocabulary appropriately
- ◆ Using case studies/scenarios/role plays to come to reasoned conclusions and develop the ability to understand alternative viewpoints
- ◆ Evaluating business concepts in light of real life examples
- ◆ Proposing and justifying appropriate courses of action
- ◆ Contributing effective ideas and considering others' views when working as part of a team
- ◆ Sharing information and explaining its importance
- ◆ Using information to analyse causes of problems and devise effective solutions
- ◆ Planning, organising and completing tasks

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that learners have opportunities to develop these skills as an integral part of their learning experience.

It is important that learners are aware of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they are developing in the Course and the activities they are involved in that provide realistic opportunities to practise and/or improve them.

At Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will be using a range of higher order thinking skills. They will also develop skills in independent and autonomous learning.

Approaches to assessment

Assessment in Advanced Higher Courses will generally reflect the investigative nature of Courses at this level, together with high-level problem-solving and critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis.

This emphasis on higher order skills, together with the more independent learning approaches that learners will use, distinguishes the added value at Advanced Higher level from the added value at other levels.

There are different approaches to assessment, and teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, as well as understanding of their learners and their varying needs, to determine the most appropriate ones and, where necessary, to consider workable alternatives.

Assessments must be fit for purpose and should allow for consistent judgements to be made by all teachers and lecturers. They should also be conducted in a supervised manner to ensure that the evidence provided is valid and reliable.

Unit assessment

Assessments must ensure that the evidence generated demonstrates, at the least, the minimum level of competence for each Unit. Teachers and lecturers preparing assessment methods should be clear about what that evidence will look like.

Sources of evidence likely to be suitable for Advanced Higher Units could include:

- ◆ meaningful contribution to group work and/or discussions (making use of log books, blogs, question and answer sessions to confirm individual learners have met the required standards)
- ◆ presentation of information to other groups and/or recorded oral evidence
- ◆ exemplification of concepts, eg using a diagram
- ◆ interpretation of numerical data
- ◆ practical demonstration with commentary/explanation/narrative
- ◆ investigations
- ◆ answers to multiple choice questions
- ◆ short written responses
- ◆ extended response essay-type questions

Evidence should include the use of appropriate subject-specific terminology as well as the use of real-life examples where appropriate.

Flexibility in the method of assessment provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate attainment in a variety of ways and so reduce barriers to attainment.

The structure of an assessment used by a centre can take a variety of forms, for example:

- ◆ Individual pieces of work could be collected in a folio as evidence for Outcomes and Assessment Standards.
- ◆ An assessment could cover each complete Outcome.
- ◆ An assessment could combine the Outcomes of one or more Units.
- ◆ An assessment could require more than the minimum competence, which would allow learners to prepare for the Course assessment.

Teachers and lecturers should note that learners' day-to-day work may produce evidence which satisfies assessment requirements of a Unit, or Units, either in full or partially. Such naturally-occurring evidence may be used as a contribution towards Unit assessment. However, such naturally-occurring evidence must still be recorded and evidence such as written reports, recording forms, PowerPoint slides, drawings/graphs, video footage or observational checklists provided.

Combining assessment across Units

Units will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*. Each Unit can be assessed on an individual Outcome-by-Outcome basis or via the use of combined assessment for some or all Outcomes.

A combined approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of tasks and allow more emphasis on learning and teaching. Evidence could be drawn from a range of activities for a combined assessment. Care must be taken to ensure that combined assessments provide appropriate evidence for all the Outcomes that they claim to assess.

Combining assessment will also give centres more time to manage the assessment process more efficiently. When combining assessments across Units, teachers/lecturers should use e-assessment wherever possible. Learners can easily update portfolios, electronic or written diaries and recording sheets.

For some Advanced Higher Courses, it may be that a strand of work which contributes to a Course assessment method is started when a Unit is being delivered and is completed in the Course assessment. In these cases, it is important that the evidence for the Unit assessment is clearly distinguishable from that required for the Course assessment.

Preparation for Course assessment

Each Course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable learners to prepare for Course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the Course and at various points throughout the Course for consolidation and support. It may also be used for preparation for Unit assessment, and, towards the end of the Course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for Course assessment.

For this Advanced Higher Course, the assessment methods for Course assessment are a question paper and a project. Learners should be given opportunities to practise these methods and prepare for them.

Examples of activities to include within this preparation time include:

- ◆ Preparing for the components of Course assessment, for example:
 - preparing for non-question paper components — selecting topics, gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information (as appropriate)
 - practising and refining practical skills
 - practising and refining performance skills
- ◆ practising question paper techniques, revising for the question paper, for example:
 - encouraging candidates to take time to interpret questions
 - teaching candidates how to develop their points fully, eg by giving extra evidence to support points made
 - practising giving well explained examples; considering implications

In relation to preparing for the project, teachers and lecturers should explain requirements to learners and the amount and nature of the support they can expect. However, at Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will work with more independence and less supervision and support.

Authenticity

In terms of authenticity, there are a number of techniques and strategies to ensure that learners present work that is their own. Teachers and lecturers should put in place mechanisms to authenticate learner evidence.

In Advanced Higher Courses, because learners will take greater responsibility for their own learning and work more independently, teachers and lecturers need to have measures in place to ensure that work produced is the learner's own work.

For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with learners
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ notes from independent reading/listening to visiting speakers

Group work approaches as part of the preparation for assessment can be helpful to simulate real-life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills.

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the preparation for assessment and also for formal assessment. However, there must be clear evidence for each learner to show that the learner has met the evidence requirements.

For more information, please refer to SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#).

Added Value

Advanced Higher Courses include assessment of added value which is assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

In Advanced Higher Courses, added value involves the assessment of higher order skills such as high-level and more sophisticated investigation and research skills, critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis. Learners may be required to analyse and reflect upon their assessment activity by commenting on it and/or drawing conclusions with commentary/justification. These skills contribute to the uniqueness of Advanced Higher Courses and to the overall higher level of performance expected at this level.

In this Course, added value will be assessed by means of a question paper and a project.

The question paper is used to assess whether the learner can retain and consolidate the knowledge and skills gained in individual Units. It assesses

knowledge and understanding and the various different applications of knowledge such as reasoning, analysing, evaluating and solving problems.

The project is used to assess a wide range of high-order cognitive and practical skills and to integrate assessment. For example the project develops a number of high order skills and brings them together, such as skills relating to planning, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and report-writing. The learner will carry out a significant part of the work for the project independently with minimal supervision.

In this Advanced Higher Course, the project is an *investigation*. This provides continuity with the Advanced Higher Course being replaced.

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Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course/Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

The greater flexibility and choice in Advanced Higher Courses provide opportunities to meet a range of learners' needs and may remove the need for learners to have assessment arrangements. However, where a disabled learner needs a reasonable adjustment/assessment arrangements to be made, you should refer to the guidance given in the above link.

Appendix 1: Further information on Units in the Course

The following activities could support the delivery of the Units in this Course and may suit the needs of learners with different learning styles. These approaches include extensive use of case studies, team working exercises and role plays, which will enable learners to explore first-hand issues concerning a variety of topics.

The Internal Business Environment

Management and leadership theory, teams and motivation

- ◆ Lecturing, where learners take their own notes, or expand on PowerPoint headings, about theoretical material concerning management, leadership, motivation, teamwork, change.
- ◆ Role plays, eg interaction between managers adopting different styles and their subordinates; workers operating on the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy and managers proposing a job enrichment scheme; team members at different stages of a group's life cycle, or adopting different team roles; managers and workers during the introduction of change; learners not taking part in the role play could be split into groups, each supporting one of the participants as they watch the role play; this can be most productive if learners are asked to adopt a point of view different from their natural inclination.
- ◆ Group tasks where each learner is assigned a role (eg paternalistic leader, unco-operative worker), unknown to other learners, and adheres to it while carrying out the task; one or two members could be designated observers and issued with clipboards and a checklist of questions to answer.
- ◆ Debriefing after role plays or group tasks to explore the issues raised, eg what contributed to success or failure; learners could prepare a report on their experience in the team, and how far it fits in with management theory.
- ◆ Viewing video material from televised or commercial sources, eg about different approaches to management, styles of leadership, motivation, team work, followed by whole class discussion of the issues raised.
- ◆ Answering self-assessment questionnaires prior to undertaking group tasks, eg to establish the individual learner's leadership style, preferred team role, or preferred method of motivation; then discussing how best to allocate learners to groups in light of the findings.

- ◆ Interviews, face-to-face or via computer, with local managers/members of the centre's management team, where learners pose a set of questions which they have prepared in advance.
- ◆ Class debates, eg on topics such as: Which is the best style of management? Does money ever cease to motivate?

Time and task management

- ◆ Using time and task management principles, eg issuing learners with forms on which they identify personal short and long term goals, then asking them to keep a time log for a few days; the percentage of time spent on goal-related activities can then be analysed and time wasters identified; learners can then be encouraged to eliminate these and use their time more effectively by applying time-management techniques such as prioritising and minimising interruptions.

Managing change

- ◆ Teacher-led discussion of Kurt Lewin's change model illustrated by a simple flowchart of the stages; learners could be encouraged to add their own notes about what each stage involves using the internet for further research.
- ◆ In small groups, brainstorming the factors influencing an organisation to change or to resist change; groups write positive and negative factors on differently coloured Post-it notes; all suggestions are then assembled under the headings 'internal' and 'external', and the whole class discusses ways to strengthen the positive and reduce the negative.
- ◆ Explanation of different methods of introducing change, eg 'top-down', 'negotiated', followed by analysis of examples from printed media, the internet or learners' personal experience; identification of the costs and benefits of each method, either individually in writing, or in small groups which then feed findings back to the whole class.
- ◆ Interviewing a local business person, or a senior member of staff at the centre, about a recent change their organisation has introduced, and evaluating the approach used in terms of how it fits in with management theory, the way in which it was introduced, and its effectiveness.

Others

- ◆ Engagement in enterprise activities, eg Young Enterprise, mini-enterprise ventures, or courses such as Business Dynamics.
- ◆ Quizzes and games.
- ◆ Obscurity — the teacher/lecturer displays a list of topics, eg style of management, method of motivation, stage in the change process, role of management according to Mintzberg; each learner writes down one example for each heading; the object is to think of the most obscure answers; learners

then share answers, scoring no marks if no-one else has given the same example, one mark if one person has and so on; lowest score wins; if others challenge an answer the person giving it must explain why it is correct, or it could quickly be researched online; penalty of 10 for a wrong answer.

- ◆ Only a minute — each learner speaks for one minute on a topic drawn from a hat; if they repeat themselves other learners may challenge and continue to talk about the topic for the rest of the minute; three points are awarded if the person survives the minute uninterrupted, one point to each person who successfully interrupts, with a further point if they get to the end of the minute.

The External Business Environment

Global business

- ◆ Research into Scottish multinational companies (MNCs) using a variety of media such as the internet, newspapers and business related magazines, MNC annual reports to identify factors that have led to growth, and different methods of growth.
- ◆ Analysis of the impact of MNCs on host and home countries — learners could be split into two groups, one to explore the effects of being a host country and the other the effects of being a home country; each group could then prepare a presentation to present its findings to fellow learners.
- ◆ Holding a class debate on to the benefits and costs to the UK of being both a significant home and a significant host country for several MNCs.
- ◆ Illustration of the effects of transfer pricing on a MNC's profits diagrammatically, or by the use of tables; learners could be given different scenarios and asked to calculate how net profit changes when the transfer price is altered, and the implications for the MNC.
- ◆ Using current media articles about the activities of MNCs as a basis for class discussion or individual response.
- ◆ Viewing video material from televised or commercial sources about large MNCs while answering a list of pre-prepared questions/making notes which are written up later.
- ◆ Interviews, face-to-face or via computer, with employees of MNCs from any level of the hierarchy, with each learner contributing at least one question.
- ◆ Asking learners to compare the extent to which their lifestyle relies on goods and services created outside the UK with their parents' or grandparents' experience, leading on to a discussion of the effects of increasing globalisation on businesses and consumers.

- ◆ Perusing a collection of annual reports of UK MNCs, either individually or in groups, and using the financial data to analyse performance.
- ◆ Inviting the local MP/MSP/MEP to discuss current EU issues with learners.
- ◆ Inviting a representative from a firm which has a works council in operation to explain the council's operations.
- ◆ Class debates on topics such as the pros and cons of UK (or Scottish) membership of the EU; the euro; costs and benefits of EU legislation
- ◆ Media watch — learners could be encouraged to look out for articles on current EU developments and add them to a bulletin board, and read and comment on the contributions of others.

Current issues

- ◆ Engaging with case studies — preferably 'real life' ones — involving ethical dilemmas, and responding to them by group or class discussion and/or producing written answers to a set of questions.
- ◆ Interviewing local business people, or visiting local businesses, to explore and evaluate (in writing or group discussion) attitudes to corporate social responsibility.
- ◆ Researching developments in technology and their effects using websites such as bized.co.uk and tutor2u.net.
- ◆ Making field trips to factories to observe the use of technology and worker roles, and to their surrounding areas to assess the effects on the immediate environment; learners could interview both factory personnel and local residents, perhaps using a questionnaire they have devised.
- ◆ Taking part in role playing exercises involving business problems, eg a small business owner trying to negotiate a loan with a bank manager; a manager in a MNC asking for favourable treatment from a local council; for maximum effect learners would need to be given time to prepare the arguments for their role in advance.
- ◆ Holding a class debate on whether the Scottish and UK governments are doing enough to assist small businesses.
- ◆ Visiting the Scottish Parliament to observe a business-related debate.

Other activities

- ◆ Regularly giving learners a variety of opportunities to present their findings to the rest of the class, both individually and as part of a group.

- ◆ Arranging a weekly session, possibly at the start of the week, where each learner brings in an article which they have already read and understood; then allowing learners in turn to summarise and discuss their articles with the rest of the class.
- ◆ Quizzes, perhaps using popular TV formats — available on internet sites such as tes.co.uk

Researching a Business

Research and analytical techniques

- ◆ Learners should be given opportunities to undertake personal market research; they should be trained in the choice and application of field research techniques (such as observation, surveys, and/or experiments) which are appropriate for the situation being examined, bearing in mind constraints such as time and cost.
- ◆ Local business people could be invited to describe their methods of researching their markets to groups of learners; information in annual reports of companies and from the internet could be used to identify techniques used by larger firms.
- ◆ Using questionnaires
 - Learners could be shown a variety of questionnaires and invited to analyse their effectiveness in achieving their purpose, followed by class discussion, leading to the drawing up of a list of principles of questionnaire design.
 - The class could then agree on a relevant topic for research and ask groups of learners to create questionnaires; these could then be combined to produce a class questionnaire; each learner could then distribute a few copies to friends and family; learners could be asked to chart results and draw conclusions about the way forward.
 - Individual learners could then be invited to think of a new product or service, and then devise and administer a questionnaire to explore its viability; students could then chart their findings and present them to the class.
 - Learners may need encouragement and training to speak to people whom they do not know personally; role playing exercises where one learner plays the interviewer, one the interviewee, can help build confidence.
- ◆ Case studies can be used to present situations of change to learners; they should be encouraged to draw up force field analyses when appropriate; whole class or group discussion can then identify the most significant forces; learners should be given opportunities to develop well thought out conclusions and recommend future courses of action.

- ◆ Learners can access examples of Gantt charts and critical path analysis, as well as instructions on how to construct them, via the internet or standard business studies textbooks; learners can construct both items graphically in Word using tables and shapes.
- ◆ Learners should be given plenty of practice in weighing up internal and external factors by carrying out SWOT analyses in a range of contexts, and devising appropriate courses of action based on their findings; this may be done through the use of case studies or video material, or by observing/engaging with local organisations.
- ◆ Local business owners and/or managers could be invited to discuss with learners the advantages and disadvantages of different analytical techniques used to assist in the decision making process.
- ◆ Each learner could ask a local business person to be their mentor; a standard letter could be created stating the terms of the mentorship, eg mainly e-mail contact, maximum one meeting per term, no expectation of the business person beyond responding to the learner's queries, to increase the likelihood of a favourable reply.

Evaluating financial information

- ◆ Learners could gain experience in handling financial information by analysing the final accounts of companies included in annual reports, as well as financial information about business in the media; they should be given practice in using accounting ratios to draw conclusions about liquidity, profitability and efficiency and the extent to which organisations depend on borrowed finance (gearing ratio).
- ◆ Case studies from published or internet sources including financial information about real firms can be used as a stimulus for questions.
- ◆ Although not required to draw up final accounts, learners will benefit from plenty of practice in understanding and interpreting them; they could be issued with copies of balance sheets or profit and loss accounts with some items — eg current assets or gross profit — missing and asked to calculate the missing figures; learners should be given the opportunity to calculate appropriate accounting ratios and use these to explain changes in business performance.
- ◆ Learners should be given practice in making financial comparisons between organisations; they could be presented with a short list of accounting ratios, eg return on capital employed, profit percentages, rate of stock turnover for two similar organisations and asked to compare performance.
- ◆ Final accounts of clubs to which learners or their families belong or charities to which they subscribe, or family businesses if available, could be used as real life examples; learners could be invited to identify similarities and

differences between the headings in these and company accounts; discuss different ways in which an excess of revenue over costs may be distributed; assess how different financial objectives might influence decision making.

- ◆ Learners should be taught to examine financial information critically, with an awareness of its limitations as a basis for decision making, and of factors, such as different methods of calculating depreciation, stock valuation and the value of intangible assets, which can hamper direct comparisons between organisations.
- ◆ Computer simulations could be used to give learners hands-on experience of manipulating data in accounts.

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Appendix 2: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment
- ◆ [Course Specifications](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [Overview of Qualification Reports](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) and [SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)

Administrative information

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History of changes to Advanced Higher draft Course/Unit Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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