



# **Advanced Higher Business Management — draft Course rationale and summary**



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# Course rationale

## Background

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

The Advanced Higher Business Management Course provides learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to analyse and evaluate complex and interrelated business information and issues.

The Course encourages learners to become better informed and more open and independently minded individuals capable of applying their skills to current business contexts. Studying Advanced Higher Business Management will enable learners to develop confidence in their ability to analyse business situations and draw valid, logical conclusions as a result of undertaking their own research.

Learners' horizons will be extended as they will be challenged to look at the underpinning principles which guide managerial decision making in business at local, national and global levels. This will enable them to become more confident and successful in their ability to understand and offer solutions to business issues.

In an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing global market, learners will have their confidence and ability to function as effective citizens enhanced by having gained an understanding of the world of business.

The investigative and higher-order thinking skills developed throughout this Course will give learners opportunities to contribute to team working and to working more independently. This will develop attributes such as taking responsibility and ownership, self-motivation, using initiative, and communication and interpersonal skills, all of which are important for successful lifelong learning and for entering the workplace.

The Course covers a broad area of learning that allows for further progression and depth of study at a later date, as well as allowing learning to develop in a challenging and enjoyable way. Understanding and applying the key concepts and theories of management through current business contexts ensures that its relevance to learners is far-reaching.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

A vibrant and innovative business culture is a vital component of Scotland's economic success.

The purpose of this Course is to prepare learners to play an active part in this culture by equipping them with an understanding of the national and global nature of business. This will include the challenges posed by globalisation and the effect it has on Scotland's businesses and environment, business and management theories, and principles of effective management used in different

organisations. Learners will develop analytical and research skills by investigating real organisations in a range of contexts.

The Course aims to enable learners to:

- ◆ enhance the skills of independent learning, research, critical analysis and problem solving
- ◆ 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 study of Business Management provides learners with a perspective which gives them the ability to research, analyse and interpret the actions and decisions taken by real organisations and to explain how these actions and decisions might affect businesses and their economic success.

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 as a key focus of this Course not only encourages independent learning and the use of initiative, but also provides 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. It provides an in-depth knowledge and understanding of managerial theories and aims that underpin the actions taken and decisions made by large organisations.

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

The study of business management will appeal to learners who are interested in current business affairs, who recognise the dynamic nature of business and its effects on society, and who have a desire to find out more about how large organisations are managed and react to changes, often on a global scale.

It will appeal to learners who recognise the skills it develops, such as having an enquiring, logical and analytical mind, and the ability to think laterally, critically and creatively, and who enjoy taking an active part in discussing current business issues with their teachers/lecturers and peers.

This Course is suitable for learners who are secure in their learning at Higher Business Management and who are self-motivated, have the ability to use their initiative, and are able to work with minimal supervision. This is because a major part of the Course involves independent learning through research and investigation skills. These skills can be achieved by those who develop an ethos of keeping up to date with current business issues by watching the news and other relevant TV shows, and by reading relevant sections in newspapers and on the internet. This will increase their understanding of current business-related issues.

By doing this Course, learners will develop higher-order thinking skills of research, investigation, applying, analysis and evaluation through their ability to explain underpinning management concepts and theories relating to current business situations. Literacy is developed as this Course encourages wider reading, and learners will have the ability to communicate business ideas and opinions in a coherent logical manner. Numeracy is developed by quantitative analysis of financial information.

The Course supports enterprise through investigative and decision-making skills based around researching a real business, and employability through gaining desirable levels of business knowledge.

By developing many transferable skills, such as autonomous learning, this Course offers very good preparation for and transition to higher education institutions.

Successful completion of this Course opens up a wide range progression of routes for learners. These include:

- ◆ degrees in Business Studies and other business-related disciplines
- ◆ Higher National Diplomas in Business Studies and other business-related disciplines
- ◆ careers in a wide range of management functions within the private, public and third sectors

## **Course summary**

**Course title: Advanced Higher Business Management**

**SCQF level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)**

### **Course outline**

#### **Mandatory Units**

The Course comprises the following mandatory Units:

<b>The External Business Environment (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>
<b>The Internal Business Environment (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>
<b>Researching and Making Business Decisions (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>

**Course assessment** **8 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes eight SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

# Course structure and conditions of award

## Course structure

The Course blends academic rigour with the development of practical skills. It offers wide opportunities for the development of higher-order thinking skills. These skills, along with the underpinning knowledge and understanding of business management theories, are developed through a range of current business contexts.

The Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit, there is a degree of flexibility in how study is undertaken. By its nature, the Course develops a wide range of transferrable skills for learning, life and work by providing learners with the opportunities for active learning in studying current business contexts.

These transferrable skills include: critical thinking, analysis and evaluation; interpretation of data; making and justifying decisions; research and investigation; employability skills and attitudes; and oral and written communication. These skills will be developed and applied in a range of current business contexts covered in the Units of the Course.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways.

However, there is scope in the design of the Units to allow learners to work independently and for the Course to be taught in an integrated way.

### **The External Business Environment (Advanced Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will develop skills including a detailed knowledge and an in-depth understanding of the influences on organisations at a multinational and global level. The Unit provides learners with the opportunities to investigate how an organisation is affected by external factors and to gain an in-depth understanding of the responsibilities of managers in an economic, social and environmental context. Learners will analyse and evaluate the impact of such external factors and consider the implications of various courses of action.

### **The Internal Business Environment (Advanced Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will gain a thorough grounding in the discipline which forms the basis of management practice. The Unit allows learners to carry out activities that will expand their knowledge of both traditional and contemporary management and motivational theories used by organisations to maximise their efficiency. It also allows learners to analyse and evaluate theories relating to internal factors that influence the success of individuals and teams.

### **Researching and Making Business Decisions (Advanced Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will develop research, investigation and decision making skills, as well as knowledge and understanding of the techniques organisations use to forecast, analyse and prepare for change. The Unit will allow learners to carry out an investigation based on a real business, using a range of research and analysis techniques, and to draw appropriate conclusions and make informed decisions. These activities will help learners to become competent and confident in the analysis of business data.

### **Conditions of award**

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

# Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

## Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specification.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units is provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

## Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of added value. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Advanced Higher Business Management Course, the added value of the Course will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

This will be assessed through a combination of a [question paper](#)<sup>1</sup> and a [project](#)<sup>2</sup>.

The question paper will require demonstration of a breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills accumulated from across the Course.

The project will extend learners' knowledge of business concepts by requiring them to apply relevant skills and understanding, and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

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<sup>1</sup> See link above for definitions.

<sup>2</sup> See link above for definitions.