



Advanced Higher
Course
Specification



Advanced Higher Business Management Course Specification

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

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Course outline

Course title: Advanced Higher Business Management

SCQF: level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)

Course code: to be advised

Mandatory Units

The External Business Environment (Advanced Higher)	8 SCQF credit points
The Internal Business Environment (Advanced Higher)	8 SCQF credit points
Researching a Business (Advanced Higher)	8 SCQF credit points

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.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ Higher Business Management Course

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ 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

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

Rationale

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 required 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 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 study of Business Management provides learners with a perspective that 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 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. It provides an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the 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.

The Course 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. It will also interest learners who enjoy taking an active part in discussing current business issues with their teachers/lecturers and peers.

This Course is suitable for learners who have successfully completed Higher Business Management, are self-motivated and have the ability to use their initiative and 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 programmes, 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 of progression routes for learners. These include Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degrees in Business Studies and other business-related disciplines, and careers in a wide range of management functions within the private, public or third sectors.

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 investigative skills; employability skills and attitudes; and oral and written communication skills. 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 number 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 investigative and analytical skills and a detailed knowledge and in-depth understanding of the effect of external 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 that 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 a Business (Advanced Higher)

In this Unit, learners will develop research, investigative and decision-making skills. This will help learners to become competent and confident in the analysis of business data and will prepare them to carry out an investigation into an organisation.

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.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section.

This includes:

- ◆ 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 for effective leadership in different business contexts
- ◆ demonstrating an understanding of the impact that external agencies can have on business
- ◆ demonstrating an understanding of 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

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

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 judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows.

The External Environment (Advanced Higher)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their ability to:

- ◆ analyse the activities of multinational and global companies
- ◆ assess the impact of the external factors on business

The Internal Environment (Advanced Higher)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of theories and practices adopted by managers to improve effectiveness
- ◆ ability to analyse and evaluate approaches used by managers with teams and individuals

Researching a Business (Advanced Higher)

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their:

- ◆ ability to research, analyse and evaluate a range of business data for effective decision making

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](#)¹. 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.

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>

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

- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

This will be assessed through a Business Management [question paper](#)² and [project](#)³.

The question paper will require demonstration 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.

² Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>

³ See link above for definition.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.2 Writing

2 Numeracy

2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.1 Employability

4.4 Enterprise

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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