Advanced Higher Course Specification

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Advanced Higher Business Management

Course code:	C810 77
Course assessment code:	X810 77
SCQF:	level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2019–20

This document provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver the course.

Contents

Course overview

This course consists of 32 SCQF credit points, which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for candidates to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	80	2 hours and 45 minutes
Component 2: project	40	see 'Course assessment' section

Recommended entry	Progression
Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre. Candidates should have achieved the Higher Business Management course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.	♦ a range of business-related Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) ♦ degrees in business and other related disciplines ♦ careers in a wide range of management functions within the private, public, and third sectors ♦ further study, employment and/or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across both course assessment components.

Course rationale

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

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

Business plays an important role in society, as it creates wealth, prosperity, jobs, and choices for consumers. It is therefore essential to have effective businesses and business managers to sustain this role.

This course helps candidates understand the underpinning principles which guide managerial decision making in business at local, national, and global levels. It develops candidates' ability to analyse business situations and reach valid, logical conclusions.

The investigative and higher-order thinking skills developed throughout the course enable candidates to contribute to team working and to work more independently. This develops 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.

Purpose and aims

The course prepares candidates to play an active part in Scotland's vibrant and innovative business culture, by equipping them with an understanding of the local, national, and global nature of business. This includes the challenges posed by globalisation and the effect it has on Scotland's businesses and the business environment.

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

The course aims to enable candidates 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 reach conclusions
♦ evaluate the social, ethical, and global factors that affect local, national, and multinational organisations
♦ analyse and evaluate leadership theories, management schools of thought and approaches to managing change
♦ prepare and critically evaluate a range of analytical techniques and management techniques used to assist in effective planning and decision making at a strategic level

Who is this course for?

This course is suitable for candidates who are interested in entering the world of business, as an employee, a manager, or a self-employed person. It offers excellent preparation for, and transition to, higher education institutions, by developing many transferable skills, such as autonomous learning.

Course content

The course has three areas of study:

The external business environment
Candidates develop a detailed knowledge and in-depth understanding of the effects of external influences on organisations operating at a multinational and global level. They gain an in-depth understanding of current issues affecting organisations in an economic, social and environmental context, and consider the effectiveness of various courses of action.

The internal business environment
Candidates expand their knowledge of both traditional and contemporary management theories used by organisations to maximise efficiency, and evaluate theories relating to internal factors that influence the success of teams.

Evaluating business information
Candidates develop skills in evaluating a range of business information used by organisations to reach conclusions.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course
The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

♦ evaluating strategic planning in complex business situations
♦ applying management concepts to real-life business contexts
♦ understanding and evaluating a range of schools of management thought in current business contexts
♦ analysing and evaluating a range of approaches to manage change in the current business environment
♦ analysing equality and diversity in the workplace
♦ analysing and evaluating the different skills needed for effective leadership in different business contexts
♦ analysing the impact that external agencies can have on business
♦ evaluating the impact of business at home and in a global context
♦ evaluating how analytical techniques and emerging technology can be used to support business decisions
♦ reaching conclusions and making recommendations based on the analysis and evaluation of research carried out on a topic from the course

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

The external business environment	
Global business	♦ globalisation, its effects on business and reasons for growth of multinationals ♦ foreign direct investment and joint ventures ♦ transfer pricing, exploitation of local resources and foreign influence on the economy ♦ multinational corporations — effects on host country and effects on home country ♦ trading blocs and their effect on the UK and UK organisations — the EU, ASEAN and China
Current issues	♦ business ethics, corporate social responsibility, environmental issues, government influence, and technological developments

The internal business environment	

Management	♦ roles of management, as described by Fayol and Mintzberg
	♦ management theories:
	  — classical
	  — administrative (Fayol)
	  — scientific (Taylor)
	  — bureaucratic (Weber)
	  — human relations (Mayo)
	  — neo-human relations (McGregor)
	  — contingency

Leadership	♦ leadership theories:
	  — trait
	  — contingency

Teams	♦ Tuckman's stages of group development ♦ characteristics of effective teams ♦ Belbin's team roles ♦ impact of team working on organisations and employees
Time and task management	♦ principles, methods and use

The internal business environment	
Managing change	♦ stages of change, based on Kurt Lewin's theory
	♦ approaches to managing change, for example, top-down, participative, negotiated, piecemeal and action-centred
	♦ factors affecting the success of change management
Equality and diversity	♦ impact of the Equality Act on organisations

Evaluating business information	
Research	♦ research techniques, referencing, bibliography, and footnotes
Analytical techniques	♦ preparing, describing and analysing: — a force field diagram ♦ describing and analysing: — the critical path — a Gantt chart ♦ using all three analytical techniques listed above in decision making
Evaluating financial and other information	♦ reaching conclusions from: — reported financial information — annual reports — government statistics — market data — customer surveys

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level, and are available on the SCQF website.

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

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

Teachers and lecturers must build these skills into the course at an appropriate level, where there are suitable opportunities.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information in this course specification.

The course assessment meets the purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

♦ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
♦ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
♦ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

♦ evaluate the effectiveness of business activities and decisions in unfamiliar business-related contexts
♦ apply business and management concepts, and leadership theories
♦ communicate complex business ideas and opinions
♦ research, analyse, and evaluate business information to reach conclusions and make recommendations

Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper   80 marks

The question paper gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to:

♦ analyse complex business information to evaluate strategic plans and strategic decisions of large organisations, and the impact of external factors on large organisations
♦ apply knowledge and understanding of complex business, management, and leadership theories and concepts to specific business situations
♦ evaluate the social and ethical impact of multinational corporations at home and abroad
♦ evaluate how analytical techniques and emerging technology can be used to support business decisions
♦ communicate complex business ideas and opinions

All questions are mandatory and sample from the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section of this document.

The question paper has a total mark allocation of 80 marks. This is 67% of the overall marks for the course assessment. It has two sections:

Section 1 is worth 40 marks and has a set of mandatory questions based on stimulus material in the form of a business case study. It is based on a large, real-life organisation and may include any combination of text, financial information, graphs, diagrams, charts and images. Each question ranges in value from 2-8 marks and is drawn from across the course. Questions assess breadth, application, and challenge, within the context of the case study.

Section 2 is worth 40 marks and has four mandatory questions, worth 10 marks each. Questions may have one or more parts, each ranging in value from 2-10 marks and are drawn from across the course. Questions assess breadth, application, and challenge.

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

SQA sets and marks the question paper. It is conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA.

Candidates have 2 hours and 45 minutes to complete the question paper.

Specimen question papers for Advanced Higher courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: project

Project   40 marks

The project gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to:

♦ identify an appropriate organisation or industry
♦ select a topic from the course coverage
♦ gather research from a range of sources
♦ apply knowledge and understanding of business concepts to explain, analyse, and evaluate the topic
♦ reach valid conclusions and/or make recommendations based on evidence
♦ structure a detailed, well-informed report based on the topic and organisation(s) or industry
♦ organise, present, and reference findings using appropriate conventions

The following are examples of possible report titles.

To evaluate the impact of technological developments on XXXX and its stakeholders.
To explore the reasons XXXX entered into partnership agreements with Chinese companies.
To examine XXXX's corporate social responsibility policy and its effect on the organisation and its stakeholders.
To explore the ways XXXX's ethics impacts stakeholders.
To explore how XXXX utilises teams in the production process.
To evaluate the impact of XXXX on its home and host countries.
To investigate the reasons why XXXX entered into a joint venture with YYYY and the impact of this joint venture on both the organisation and its stakeholders.
To investigate the impact of ASEAN on the XXXX industry.

The project has a total mark allocation of 40 marks. This is 33% of the overall marks for the course assessment. Marks are awarded for:

♦ introduction	5 marks
♦ analysis and evaluation	20 marks
♦ conclusions and recommendations	8 marks
♦ Research	3 marks
♦ structure and referencing	4 marks

Setting, conducting and marking the project

The project is:

♦ set by SQA
♦ conducted in centres under some supervision and control
♦ submitted to SQA for external marking

All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Assessment conditions

Time

Candidates complete the project over a period of time and should start it when they have developed the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding.

Supervision, control and authentication

The project is conducted under some supervision and control.

Candidates must carry out the project on an individual basis. Research, data collection, analysis and preparing their report must be completed independently.

They can complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, therefore, teachers and lecturers must put in place ways to authenticate evidence, for example:

♦ regular checkpoint or progress meetings with candidates
♦ short, spot-check interviews
♦ checklists which record activity and progress

Resources

The project is open book. There are no restrictions on the resources that candidates may access.

Candidates must reference the research evidence within the body of the report, using footnotes. They must provide a bibliography and can append research evidence, where appropriate.

Reasonable assistance

Candidates must complete their project independently. However, teachers and lecturers can provide reasonable assistance at relevant stages in the process, as identified below.

Reasonable assistance may include advising candidates on:

♦ the instructions and/or requirements of the project
♦ the suitability of a topic and/or organisation to research
♦ the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen topic and/or organisation
♦ possible sources of information
♦ how best to structure their report

Reasonable assistance does not include:

♦ providing candidates with full example projects
♦ directing candidates to specific text within a source of information
♦ telling candidates what analysis they can draw from a research finding
♦ marking drafts
♦ adopting a directive role or providing specific advice on how to re-phrase or improve responses

Evidence to be gathered

Candidates produce a report including a bibliography and any supporting appendices.

The bibliography must show a list of all the sources of information used, for example:

♦ website addresses used in research
♦ details of newspaper and/or magazine articles and/or books

Appendices could include, for example:

♦ statistical, graphical, and numerical data and appropriate photos or images
♦ notes taken from an audio-visual source (for example, a podcast or documentary)
♦ interview questions and responses
♦ questionnaire or survey questions and results

Volume

The report must be between 2,500 and 3,500 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography, and appendices. There should be no more than four pages of appendices (excluding the bibliography).

Candidates must submit the word count with the report on the flyleaf. If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied.

Grading

Candidates' overall grades are determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for both course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Further information

♦ [Advanced Higher Business Management subject page](#)
♦ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
♦ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
♦ [Guide to Assessment](#)
♦ [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)
♦ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
♦ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
♦ [Educational Research Reports](#)
♦ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
♦ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)
♦ [SCQF website: framework, level descriptors and SCQF Handbook](#)

Appendix: course support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. Please read these course support notes in conjunction with the course specification and the specimen question paper and coursework.

Approaches to learning and teaching

At Advanced Higher, a significant amount of learning is self-directed. Candidates should be able to demonstrate initiative and work on their own.

Some candidates may find this challenging, so it is important that you have strategies in place to support them, for example planning time for regular feedback sessions and/or discussions on a one-to-one or group basis.

You should also encourage candidates to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning.

The following tables suggest activities that could support you when delivering the course and that may suit the needs of candidates with different learning styles. These activities are designed to stimulate ideas and are not meant to be exhaustive.

The external business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
Global business	♦ effects of globalisation on business ♦ reasons for the growth of multinational corporations (MNCs)	Candidates should be aware of the: ♦ increasing importance of global operations in terms of, for example markets, all stakeholders, competitors, and reduced trade barriers ♦ costs and benefits of globalisation to businesses, for example language barriers or the chance to gain economies of scale ♦ main reasons for the rapid growth of MNCs, for example falling cost of transport, technological advancements, and the emergence of new markets being close to raw materials	♦ bringing in an article referring to an MNC to summarise and/or discuss the article with the rest of the class; this could be a regular activity, for example weekly ♦ researching MNCs using a variety of media, for example the internet and business magazines ♦ looking at MNCs' annual reports to identify and explain factors that have led to their growth
	♦ foreign direct investment ♦ joint ventures	Candidates should be aware of: ♦ the ways in which MNCs grow, including the costs and benefits to organisations of: — creating new purpose-built production facilities abroad — buying over an existing business abroad — setting up joint ventures with other organisations	♦ reviewing and discussing current articles about the activities of MNCs that have undertaken foreign direct investment or have set up joint ventures

The external business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**

	♦ transfer pricing
	♦ exploitation of local resources
	♦ foreign influence on the economy
		Candidates should be aware of the:
		
		♦ definition of transfer pricing
		♦ reasons MNCs use transfer pricing
		♦ use of transfer pricing by organisations and its effects on:
		   — tax paid
		   — profits
		   — home countries
		   — host countries
		♦ ways in which MNCs exploit local resources and the effects of exploitation of local resources, for example depleting water supplies
		♦ ability of MNCs to reduce costs because of, for example cheaper costs of land, labour, less stringent employee legislation, and lower health and safety standards
		♦ pressures MNCs put on governments when introducing new legislation and the threat to leave a country when in disagreement with national policies
			♦ using current articles to illustrate these issues and/or practices

The external business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
	♦ multinational corporations: — effects on host country — effects on home country	Candidates should be aware of the costs and benefits to the: ♦ host country of an MNC operating in it, for example exploiting resources or improving infrastructure ♦ home country of an MNC operating from it, for example repatriating profits or the lack of unskilled employment	♦ preparing group presentations on the effects of being a host country or the effects of being a home country ♦ debating in class the costs and benefits to a country of being both a home and a host country to MNCs
	♦ effects of the UK trading with: — the EU — ASEAN — China	Candidates should be aware of the: ♦ founding purpose and aims of the EU and ASEAN ♦ costs and benefits to the UK and UK organisations of trading with the EU, ASEAN and China ♦ effects of the European Single Market on the UK and UK organisations ♦ continuing impact of the EU Social Chapter on UK organisations ♦ reasons for the changes in the Chinese manufacturing industry	♦ using current media articles relating to the ways the UK trades with the EU, ASEAN and China ♦ using current media articles to investigate the ways the EU, ASEAN and China are changing, and discussing how this affects the UK and UK organisations

The external business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
Current issues	♦ business ethics ♦ corporate social responsibility ♦ environmental issues ♦ government influence ♦ technological developments	Candidates should be aware of: ♦ business ethics — distinguishing between right and wrong, making the right choice, and ensuring that ethical actions are in accord with moral values ♦ corporate social responsibility — organisations going above and beyond the law ♦ the costs and benefits to UK organisations of business ethics, corporate social responsibility and environmental issues ♦ the impact of government activity on UK organisations of, for example monetary policy, fiscal policy, legislation and social policy ♦ financial support and advice to UK organisations by government bodies ♦ the costs and benefits to UK organisations of various technological developments, including e-commerce ♦ the impact that current issues can have on whole organisations or on individual departments within an organisation, for example marketing, HR, operations, and finance	♦ discussing case studies involving ethical dilemmas ♦ interviewing local business people or visiting local businesses to explore and evaluate attitudes to corporate social responsibility

The internal business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
Management	♦ roles of management, as described by Fayol and Mintzberg ♦ management theories: — classical — administrative (Fayol) — scientific (Taylor) — bureaucratic (Weber) — human relations (Mayo) — neo-human relations (McGregor) — contingency	Candidates should be aware of the: ♦ roles of management as advocated by Fayol (including Fayol's 5 Functions of Management and 14 Principles of Management), and how carrying out these roles can have an impact on organisations ♦ 3 categories and 10 roles of management as advocated by Mintzberg, and how carrying out these roles can have an impact on organisations ♦ costs and benefits to organisations and employees of all the management theories listed ♦ ways the management theories listed are used in current business practice	♦ discussing articles about different approaches to management, for example: — Does money ever cease to motivate? — In what type of organisations is a bureaucracy appropriate? ♦ watching online videos of different schools of thought for management in action, both today and in the past
Leadership	♦ leadership theories: — trait — contingency	Candidates should be aware of the: ♦ costs and benefits to organisations and employees of the trait and contingency leadership theories (for example Fiedler's and Handy's)	♦ holding interviews with local managers and/or members of a management team

The internal business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
		♦ factors influencing the type of leadership adopted, for example staff skills, the nature of the task, and the qualities of a leader	
Teams	♦ Tuckman's stages of group development ♦ characteristics of effective teams ♦ Belbin's team roles ♦ impact of team working on organisations and employees	Candidates should be aware of the: ♦ features of each stage of group development, including adjourning (mourning) ♦ ways that stages of group development can have an impact on organisations ♦ characteristics of effective teams, for example Belbin's team roles, the size of the team, and clarity about the task ♦ impact of teams on organisations, departments, and/or individuals and team members	♦ completing the Belbin team roles questionnaire, followed by discussing whether they identify with the characteristics of the role ♦ carrying out team tasks, followed by debriefing to explore the issues raised, for example what contributed to the success or failure of the team ♦ preparing a report on their experience in the team, and how far it fits in with theory
Time and task management	♦ principles ♦ methods ♦ use	Candidates should be aware of: ♦ the benefits of good time management ♦ the problems that can arise if time is not managed effectively ♦ time stealers that can affect the management process ♦ a range of time and task-management techniques used by managers	♦ using time and task-management principles, for example identifying personal short-term and long-term goals, followed by keeping a time log for a few days, then analysing the percentage of time spent on goal-related activities and identifying the time stealers ♦ applying time-management techniques, such as prioritising work and minimising

The internal business environment			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
		♦ how managers can, for example use time and task techniques to improve effectiveness	interruptions, to eliminate time stealers and use time more effectively
Managing change	♦ stages of change, based on Kurt Lewin's theory ♦ approaches to managing change, for example top-down, participative, negotiated, piecemeal, and action-centred ♦ factors affecting the success of change management	Candidates should be aware of: ♦ the features of the stages of change, as advocated by Kurt Lewin ♦ the benefits of having an effective change-management programme ♦ the reasons for resistance to change ♦ the advantages and disadvantages of top-down, participative, negotiated, piecemeal and action-centred initiatives ♦ what change agents are used for ♦ the factors affecting the success of change management, for example organisational culture	♦ interviewing a local business person or a senior member of staff about a recent change their organisation has introduced, then evaluating the approach used in terms of how it fits with change-management theory, the way it was introduced, and its effectiveness

Equality and diversity	♦ impact of the Equality Act on organisations	Candidates should be aware of:
		
		♦ the nine protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act
		♦ description of the types of discrimination at work, for example:
		  — direct discrimination
		  — discrimination by association
			♦ interviewing local managers and/or members of a management team about equality and diversity issues
			♦ reviewing and discussing case studies relating to the impact of the Equality Act
			♦ reviewing case studies showing examples of discrimination and

The internal business environment		
Topic	**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
	— discrimination by perception — indirect discrimination — victimisation and harassment ♦ employees' right to complain after experiencing harassment or victimisation ♦ any reasonable adjustments and other exceptions ♦ the direct impact the Equality Act has in terms of recruitment, selection, leave and time off, pay and benefits, training, transfers, promotion, facilities, disciplinary issues, dismissal, and retirement ♦ the challenges of equality issues, such as the 'glass ceiling' ♦ the impact of a diverse workforce	discussing how it could be avoided by companies

Evaluating business information			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
Research	♦ research techniques, referencing, bibliography, and footnotes	Candidates should be able to: ♦ reference and draw up a bibliography when presenting the findings of a piece of research (including Harvard referencing) ♦ use footnotes in a piece of work	♦ carrying out personal research ♦ choosing and applying desk research techniques ♦ applying referencing, bibliography, and footnote techniques

Analytical techniques	♦ preparing, describing and analysing:
	  — a force field diagram
	♦ describing and analysing:
	  — the critical path
	  — a Gantt chart
	♦ using all three analytical techniques in decision making
		Candidates should be able to:
		
		♦ prepare a force field diagram and use it to identify if a particular change should take place
		
		Candidates should be aware of:
		
		♦ the features of the three analytical techniques and any of their component parts
		♦ the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three analytical techniques
		♦ the ways the three analytical techniques are used to support strategic decisions or assist in time and task management
		♦ the ways the three analytical techniques are used to make or justify decisions
		♦ how a critical path and Gantt chart can be used to measure progress (where appropriate)
			♦ reviewing case studies to present current situations, and preparing force field diagrams:
			  — discussing, as a class or group, to identify the most significant drivers and resistors for the change
			  — discussing the difference between assets for change and drivers for change
			♦ accessing examples of Gantt charts and critical path analysis, as well as instructions on how to construct them
			♦ discussing with local business owners and/or managers (visiting the class) the advantages and disadvantages of different analytical techniques used to assist in the decision-making process

Evaluating business information			
Topic		**Further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding**	**Suggested experiences and activities for candidates**
Evaluating financial and other information	♦ reaching conclusions from: — reported financial information — annual reports — government statistics — market data — customer surveys	Candidates should be aware of: ♦ how to analyse and evaluate information from the sources listed and any other relevant source ♦ any limitations and/or bias of the sources ♦ how to analyse sources to reach justified conclusions ♦ how evaluation of specific business information can be used to measure an organisation's progress and explain reasons for changes in performance	♦ reading a collection of annual reports of UK private limited companies and using the financial data to analyse performance ♦ using accounting ratios to reach conclusions about liquidity, profitability, and efficiency ♦ making comparisons from one financial period to others within one organisation to compare performance, including looking at key performance measures (KPMs) ♦ examining financial information critically, with an awareness of its limitations as a basis for decision making ♦ examining market research statistics and/or government statistics to make a judgement for future action

Preparing for course assessment

The course assessment has two components: a question paper and a project.

You should provide opportunities for candidates to practise activities similar to those expected in the course assessment, for example practising question paper techniques and using questions similar to those in the specimen and past papers.

When preparing candidates for the project, you should explain the requirements, including the amount and nature of the support they can expect.

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

You should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and you can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on the approach centres use to deliver the course. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

Some examples of potential opportunities to practise or improve these skills are provided in the following table.

Skill	How it is developed
Literacy	♦ writing structured responses to questions and/or prompts in course assessments ♦ presenting and critically analysing findings from research in a written, structured format ♦ reading material from a wide range of sources, for example newspapers, books, the internet, business documents and case studies, in order to write a summary of the information and/or respond to questions ♦ preparing notes for communicating orally through individual or group presentations, tasks, discussions, debates, and interviews
Numeracy	♦ carrying out calculations, for example when evaluating financial information in order to analyse performance or determine future strategies

Skill	How it is developed
	♦ 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 and being proactive rather than reactive
	♦ growing in confidence through carrying out personal research in a variety of contexts
	♦ gaining experience of the world of work, for example 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, 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 and/or media articles 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 action(s) from analysing information
	♦ contributing effective ideas and considering other views when working as part of a team
	♦ sharing information and explaining its importance
	♦ using information to analyse the cause of problems and devising effective solutions
	♦ planning, organising, and completing tasks

Administrative information

Published: May 2019 (version 2.0)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added as appendix	May 2019

Note: please check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

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