



National  
Qualifications

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# **Business Management Project General assessment information**

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**This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the project Component of Advanced Higher Business Management Course assessment.**

**It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.**

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**Valid from session 2015/16 and until further notice**

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# Introduction

This is the general assessment information for Advanced Higher Business Management project.

The project is worth 40 marks out of a total of 120 marks. The marks contribute to one third of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the project Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

## Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

# What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes to one third of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the project in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are the ability to:

- ◆ select a business topic from the Course to research
- ◆ use suitable business information, related to the context of the topic, 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 on the topic
- ◆ organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions

# Assessment

## Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the Added Value of this Course by means of a project.

The project will address challenge and application by assessing skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of carrying out research into a business topic. It will assess candidates' ability to apply higher order cognitive skills, such as analysis and evaluation, within the context of the topic chosen.

## Assessment overview

This assessment requires the application of a business topic to an organisation/organisations or industry. It has a research stage and a report production stage. The project is sufficiently open and flexible to allow personalisation and choice. It is designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to work independently, apply business knowledge and understanding and use higher order cognitive skills.

Candidates should identify a topic from the Course coverage which allows them to gather research from a range of sources.

Candidates should research the topic, and record and organise their findings in a coherent manner, as a report of between 2,500-3,500 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography and appendices.

Examples of report titles could be:

- ◆ What effect do technological developments have on XXXX?
- ◆ Why has XXXX entered into partnership agreements with Chinese companies?
- ◆ The process of managing change in XXXX.
- ◆ How does XXXX utilise teams in the production process?

It may be helpful for candidates to be given information early on in the Course about what they have to do to complete the project; this will allow them time to start thinking about a topic they may wish to consider as the Course progresses.

Choosing a suitable topic may be daunting for some candidates, therefore reasonable assistance to choose their topic can be given. Guidance may be given to candidates on the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen topic.

## Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

The project must be carried out:

- ◆ within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control
- ◆ independently by the candidate
- ◆ in time to meet a submission date set by SQA

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be after they have started work on the Units in the Course. There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access whilst researching the evidence and preparing the report.

Candidates must undertake this assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Coursework in Advanced Higher may involve candidates undertaking a larger amount of autonomous work without close supervision than they have previously undertaken. Assessors may provide guidance and support as part of the normal teaching and learning process. However, assessors should not adopt a directive role or provide specific advice on how to re-phrase, improve responses or provide model answers.

Clarification may be sought by candidates regarding the instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Although this project is completed under some supervision and control, it is possible for candidates to complete it outwith the learning and teaching setting. Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate the candidate's work and ensure that plagiarism does not take place. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress

Evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment will be a report of 2,500 to 3,500 words, excluding footnotes,

bibliography and appendices. The word count should be submitted with the report. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

Candidates must reference the research evidence within the report, making use of a bibliography and appending appropriate research evidence. This evidence will support the analysis/evaluation and conclusion sections of the report and give candidates the opportunity to achieve all the marks available for these sections.

## **Evidence to be gathered**

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ Completed report.
- ◆ If appropriate, a maximum of four appendices can be included.

# General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following general Marking Instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing learners for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

## General Marking Principles for the project

*This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this project. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.*

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) In producing their report, candidates will be awarded marks for specific skills, knowledge and understanding as follows:

### **Where candidates are required to 'Analyse' . . .**

Candidates must demonstrate their ability to identify/describe/explain relevant parts and the relationship between the parts and/or the whole. Candidates should be able to draw out and relate any implications and/or analyse data.

### **Where candidates are required to 'Evaluate' . . .**

Candidates must demonstrate the ability to make a reasoned judgement in terms of the effectiveness or usefulness of something based on criteria. Candidates should be able to determine the value of something within context.

### **Where candidates are required to 'Conclude' . . .**

Candidates must reach justified conclusions based on a text, scenario or set of information or data.

## Detailed Marking Instructions

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
<b>Introduction</b>	<p><b>1 mark</b> for clearly stating the aim of the report.</p> <p><b>3 marks</b> for giving detailed reasons why the topic/organisation(s)/industry are appropriate.</p> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the aim of the report is unclear</li> <li>◆ there is no evidence of relevant reasons why the topic/organisation(s)/industry are appropriate</li> </ul>	<b>4</b>	Marks will be awarded for clearly stating the aim of the report and giving detailed background information that justifies the topic and/or choice of organisation(s)/industry.
<b>Analysis and evaluation</b>	<p><b>1 mark</b> for each relevant point of analysis and/or evaluation.</p> <p>Points must be logical and backed by reasoning and/or evidence and linked to the topic of the report.</p> <p>Analysis and evaluation should use details from research evidence, diagrams, charts and images as appropriate.</p> <p>No marks should be given if there is no evidence of analytical or evaluative comments.</p>	<b>15</b>	<p>Marks will be awarded for making analytical and evaluative comments which are clearly based on the research and clearly linked to the topic.</p> <p>Candidates could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ make use of relevant business theories or concepts which clarifies/explains the information from their research</li> <li>◆ make comparisons between different organisations</li> <li>◆ give an opinion based on logical reasoning</li> </ul>

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<p><b>1 mark</b> for each relevant conclusion/recommendation.</p> <p>To gain the mark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The conclusion/recommendation should be based on the analysis and evaluation presented in the body of the report.</li> <li>◆ The conclusion/recommendation should be related to the aim/topic of the report.</li> </ul> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ no conclusions/recommendations are made</li> <li>◆ conclusions or recommendations are not linked to the aim/topic of the report</li> </ul>	<b>8</b>	<p>Marks will be awarded for reaching fully explained and justified conclusions/recommendations. These should be based on the research evidence, analysis and evaluation of the evidence, and be clearly linked to the aim/topic of the report.</p> <p>Candidates could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ give detailed conclusion(s)/recommendation(s) that demonstrate valid judgements have been reached</li> <li>◆ give conclusions/recommendations based on logical reasoning</li> <li>◆ explain any limitations of their conclusion(s)/recommendation(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Research</b>	<p>Up to <b>6 marks</b> for the use of at least three research sources that are up-to-date, relevant, and support the topic being researched.</p> <p>Up to <b>5 marks</b> for the use of two research sources that are up-to-date, relevant, and support the topic being researched.</p> <p>Up to <b>4 marks</b> for the use of one research source that is up-to-date, relevant, and</p>	<b>6</b>	<p>Evidence of research will be integrated throughout the report and should not be a separate section in the body of the report.</p> <p>It should be clear from the content of the report whether or not the sources used are up-to-date and appropriate.</p> <p>Some examples of research sources that could be used are:</p>

	Marking Instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
	<p>supports the topic being researched.</p> <p>No marks should be given if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ there are no research sources referenced</li> <li>◆ the sources are irrelevant to the topic/organisation(s)/industry</li> <li>◆ the sources are too historic or factually incorrect</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ interviews/surveys/graphs/questionnaires</li> <li>◆ websites</li> <li>◆ newspapers/magazines/journals/books</li> <li>◆ audio/visual media</li> <li>◆ field trips or visiting speakers</li> </ul>
<b>Structure and referencing</b>	<p>Marks will be given for presenting a coherent report that has a logical structure, is fully referenced, makes consistent and accurate use of business terminology, and in which diagrams/charts/images have been used effectively, on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Up to <b>2 marks</b> for a clear and concise report that includes suitable headings, font and page numbers.</li> <li>◆ Up to <b>2 marks</b> for consistent and accurate use of business terminology throughout.</li> <li>◆ Up to <b>2 marks</b> for full referencing throughout, including a bibliography.</li> <li>◆ Maximum of <b>1 mark</b> for the use of diagrams/charts/images.</li> </ul> <p>No marks should be given for each of the elements listed above if there is no evidence.</p>	<b>7</b>	<p>Evidence for this will be integrated throughout the report.</p> <p>A clearly structured report should have the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ appropriate use of headings and sub-headings that enable the reader to follow the line of thought</li> <li>◆ appropriate use of fonts and line spacing/concise content/page numbers</li> <li>◆ consistent use of accurate business terminology throughout, with any unusual terms fully explained to allow readers to understand them</li> <li>◆ use of diagrams/charts/images</li> <li>◆ do not accept logo on its own</li> <li>◆ use of references to acknowledge sources of information</li> <li>◆ a bibliography at the end of the report listing all sources of information</li> </ul> <p>Candidates can use any relevant referencing system and should use this consistently within their report.</p>

# Administrative information

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Amendments made to the Detailed Marking Instructions, as follows: 'explaining' replaced by 'stating' in the Introduction section; 'graphs' added to the examples of research sources in the Research section; 'do not accept logo on its own' added to the Structure and referencing section.	Qualifications Manager	October 2017

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