



Business Management

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of National 5 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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Contents

Introduction	1
What this assessment covers	2
Assessment	3
General Marking Instructions	6

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for National 5 Business Management assignment.

This assignment is worth 30 marks. The marks contribute 30% 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 assignment 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

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

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 30% of the total marks for the Course.

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

- ◆ selecting an appropriate business topic or issue
- ◆ collecting information/evidence relating to the context of the topic or issue from a range of sources
- ◆ applying knowledge and understanding of business concepts to explain and analyse the key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ analysing the business data/information to reach valid conclusions relating to the business topic or issue
- ◆ producing an appropriately formatted business report which clearly communicates findings to the owner/manager of the organisation

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of an assignment.

The assignment will address challenge and application by assessing the candidate's ability to apply skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Course. The assignment will require candidates to apply their planning, research, analytical, decision-making and communication skills by producing a report based on a topic or issue within the context of a small to medium sized business.

Assessment overview

The assignment is designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to work independently and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow personalisation and choice in the business and topic chosen.

To achieve this Component, candidates will have to undertake some research and prepare a short business report on a business topic/area based on an organisation of their choice. This report should focus on the topic/area within the organisation and should demonstrate planning, research, analytical and decision-making skills.

Marks for the report will be awarded for:

- ◆ background information — 4 marks
- ◆ research methods and sources — 6 marks
- ◆ analysis and interpretation — 12 marks
- ◆ conclusion — 5 marks
- ◆ collating and reporting — 3 marks

The assessor should support the candidate in selecting an appropriate topic/area and organisation to focus the report on. The assessor can also offer advice on the accessibility and availability of resources for their chosen topic and how best to structure a business report.

Some appropriate topics are provided in the table below for guidance.

Examples of business topic could include:	Example of an area to focus on could include:
Marketing	Pricing tactics of . . .
Human Resources	Recruitment and selection in . . .
Finance	Sources of finance for expansion of . .
Operations	Production methods used by . . .

Assessment conditions

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

This assignment has two stages - the planning and research stage and the report preparation stage.

These two stages may run concurrently. For example, the candidate could prepare their findings after each small section of research and analysis is complete and build their report over time. The report may alternatively be completed once all of the research and analysis has been done. While the assessor may offer guidance during the research and analysis stage, the candidate should be working independently with no assistance during the report production stage.

The research for this assignment should be done at a time when the candidates are ready to undertake this piece of work. This assignment will be carried out over a period of time and may be undertaken alongside the learning and teaching of the Units or, alternatively, once the Units have been completed. The research and report production is best completed once the majority of the Course has been taught.

The research for the report can be carried out in open conditions. Candidates should be given sufficient time to carry out their research to complete the report for submission. However, the preparation of the report should be completed in class time and under supervised conditions.

Stage one – planning and research stage

This stage should be carried out in open conditions. During this stage there are no restrictions on the resources which candidates can access. However, it is recommended that candidates make use of organisations' websites and other information, rather than contacting organisations directly.

The level of research involved in this assignment does not necessarily require direct contact with the organisation. Examples of organisations that have sufficient research material on their websites include Tunnocks Ltd, Shelter, Visit Scotland, Borders Biscuits Ltd, and Baxters Ltd.

Although candidates should be given sufficient time to carry out their research, analysis and preparation for producing their report, it is recommended that this stage be completed within a time period of up to four hours.

Reasonable assistance may be provided to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates but can 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 it becomes support for assessment

and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

During this stage, reasonable assistance may include:

- ◆ advising candidates on the choice of a topic/area to research
- ◆ advising candidates on possible sources of information
- ◆ clarifying instructions/requirements of the assignment
- ◆ feedback on interim progress

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

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ photographs, film or audio evidence

Stage two – producing the report

This stage should be carried out under a high degree of supervision. Candidates must not communicate with one another and must be in sight of the assessor during the time they are producing their report. The assessor should not give any assistance during this stage.

The report should be approximately three to four A4 pages in length and may be completed at the end of stage one or at appropriate points during stage one. Overall, this should take no longer than one hour.

During the report production stage, candidates will be permitted to access any of their research findings but should submit no more than four pieces of research in an appendix attached to the report.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ the business report produced by candidate
- ◆ any appendices to support the report. Examples of appendices may include:
 - statistical, graphical or numerical data
 - interview questions and/or responses
 - survey results/questionnaire and/or results
 - list of internet search engine results
 - extracts/photos/images from appropriate websites
 - newspaper article or extracts
 - notes taken from a visit or a talk
 - notes taken from a written or audio visual source
 - a list of all the sources of information used

General Marking Instructions

General Marking Principles for National 5 Business Management

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

Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.

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.

In producing their report, candidates will be awarded marks for specific skills knowledge and understanding as follows:

Background information

Marks will be awarded for stating the topic area and the business, and giving some background information on the business.

Research methods and sources

Marks will be awarded for explaining the choice of research methods and sources. At least two research sources must be used to gain full marks. Up to a maximum of 4 marks can be awarded for each research source used.

Analysis and interpretation of findings

Marks will be awarded for making analytical and/or interpretive comments which are based on the information/evidence collected. More than one comment may be made from each piece of evidence/findings.

Conclusions

Marks will be awarded for conclusions drawn from the research findings.

Collating and reporting

Marks will be awarded for accurately and concisely summarising findings using appropriate headings and fonts/sizes and making good use of display styles.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Minor change to wording in the introductory paragraphs of 'General Marking Instructions' section.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
2.0	Changes to marks available in the 'Assessment overview' section. Wording amended for collating and reporting in the 'General Marking Instructions' section.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015

Security and confidentiality

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