Advanced Higher Business Management

Project

Assessment task

This document provides information for teachers and lecturers about the coursework component of this course in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed. It **must** be read in conjunction with the course specification.

Valid from session 2024–25 and until further notice.

Contents

Introduction

This document contains instructions for teachers and lecturers, marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the Advanced Higher Business Management project. You must read it in conjunction with the course specification.

This project is worth 40 marks. This is 33% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

Instructions for teachers and lecturers

Early in the course, you should give candidates information about what they have to do to complete the project. As the course progresses, this allows them time to start thinking about and researching what organisation(s) or industry and topic they may wish to consider for their project.

Choosing a suitable organisation(s) or industry and topic may be daunting for some candidates. You should provide candidates with reasonable assistance on the types of topic and organisation(s) or industry that enables them to meet all of the requirements of the project.

There is no time limit on how long candidates can spend on their project.

The timing of when to start the project is at your discretion. Candidates should start it when they have developed the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding. It is expected that candidates will work on the bulk of their project at home, in their own time. Some centres start work on the project near the beginning of the course, for example in September or October, and regularly use time in class to work on it. Some centres start the project later and use more class time to complete it.

Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions for the Advanced Higher Business Management project are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidates' evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking.

General marking principles

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

a   Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.

b   If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.

c   The report must be between 2,500 and 3,500 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography, and appendices. There is a penalty for exceeding the word count by more than 10%. There is no penalty for using fewer than 2,500 words.

d   Award marks for specific skills, knowledge and understanding as follows:
   — **analyse:** candidates must demonstrate their ability to explain relevant parts and the relationship between the parts and/or the whole — they should be able to draw out and relate any implications and/or consequences (positive and negative) and/or analyse data
   — **evaluate**: candidates must be able to justify the degree of impact of something within context
   — **conclude:** candidates must reach justified conclusions based on a text, scenario, or set of information or data

e   The project has a total mark allocation of 40 marks, broken down as follows:

Introduction (5 marks)
Award marks for stating the aim of the report, for describing the core activities of the organisation(s) or industry, and for providing detailed reasons why the report is appropriate.

Analysis and evaluation (20 marks)
Award marks for making relevant analytical and/or evaluative points based on evidence, and linked to the topic of the report.

Conclusions and recommendations (8 marks)
Award marks for drawing justified conclusions and/or making justified recommendations based on the analysis and evaluation, and related to the topic of the report.

Research (3 marks)

Award marks for using relevant, up-to-date sources of information.

Structure and referencing (4 marks)

Award marks for the layout of the report, for using appropriate business terminology, for providing footnotes and including an appropriate bibliography.

Detailed marking instructions

Project section	Marking instructions	Max marks	Additional guidance
Introduction	Award **1 mark** for clearly stating the aim of the report. Award **1 mark** for describing the core activity(s) of the organisation(s) or industry. Award **up to 3 marks** for giving detailed reasons why the report is appropriate.	5	Reasons why the report is appropriate could include, for example the suitability of the topic area, organisation(s) or industry, and/or the link between the topic and organisation(s) or industry.
Analysis and evaluation	Award **1 mark** for each relevant point of analysis. Award **1 mark** for each associated point of development and/or evaluation. Do not award marks for analysis and/or evaluation of a finding that is not evidenced.	20	Candidates must provide research evidence for the findings that they use as a basis for analysis. Candidates must clearly link analysis and/or evaluation and/or development to the topic. Analytical points **must** be based on findings of recent actions and/or activities and/or developments by the organisation or industry within a 2 to 3-year limit. Candidates could, for example: ♦ make use of relevant information from news articles, websites, videos, and/or books ♦ use information from diagrams, charts, graphs, infographics and/or images, as appropriate

Project section	Marking instructions	Max marks	Additional guidance
			♦ make use of relevant business theories and/or concepts that clarify and/or explain the information from their research ♦ make comparisons between different organisations ♦ give opinions based on logical reasoning
Conclusions and recommendations	Award **1 mark** for each relevant conclusion. Award **1 mark** for each justified, relevant recommendation. Award **1 mark** for each relevant development.	8	To gain marks: ♦ recommendations must be justified ♦ the conclusion(s) and/or recommendation(s) must be based on the analysis and evaluation presented in the body of the report ♦ the conclusion(s) and/or recommendation(s) must be related to the aim and/or topic of the report Candidates could: ♦ draw valid conclusions, pulled together from more than one finding in the analysis and evaluation section ♦ make valid recommendations, based on information in the body of the report ♦ give conclusions and/or recommendations, based on logical reasoning ♦ explain any limitations of recommendation(s)

Project section	Marking instructions	Max marks	Additional guidance
Research	Award **1 mark** for using a minimum of four relevant sources. Award an additional **1 mark** for using more than four relevant sources. Award **1 mark** if a minimum of four sources are up to date.	3	Evidence of research should be integrated throughout the report and must not be a separate section in the body of the report. Marks are based on sources used in the 'Analysis and evaluation' section only. It should be clear from the content and context within the report that the sources are relevant and up to date. Some examples of research sources that could be used are: ♦ websites ♦ news articles, magazines, journals, and/or books ♦ social media ♦ audio and/or visual media Note: four separate pieces of information taken from the same website would be considered one source.
Structure and referencing	Award **1 mark** for using the specified headings and consistent font. Award **1 mark** for using appropriate business terminology throughout. Award **1 mark** for providing footnotes for every finding in the 'Analysis and evaluation' section.	4	Evidence should be integrated throughout the report and must not be a separate section in the body of the report.

Project section	Marking instructions	Max marks	Additional guidance
	Award **1 mark** for including an appropriate bibliography.		

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the project for Advanced Higher Business Management.

This project is worth 40 marks. This is 33% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

♦ identifying an appropriate organisation or industry (which operates in the private, public or third sector)
♦ selecting a topic from the course coverage
♦ gathering up-to-date research from a range of sources
♦ applying knowledge and understanding of business concepts to explain, analyse and evaluate the topic
♦ reaching valid conclusions and/or making recommendations based on your research evidence
♦ structuring a detailed, well-informed report on the topic and organisation(s) or industry
♦ organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

Marks for the project are as follows:

♦ introduction   (5 marks)
♦ analysis and evaluation   (20 marks)
♦ conclusions and recommendations   (8 marks)
♦ research   (3 marks)
♦ structure and referencing   (4 marks)

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know if there are any specific conditions for doing this assessment.

In this assessment, you have to carry out research, analyse information, and write a report, which 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).

If your word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied. There is no penalty for using fewer than 2,500 words; however, a short report is unlikely to contain enough information to gain full marks.

You should use the section headings 'Introduction', 'Analysis and evaluation' and 'Conclusions and recommendations'. You can use additional sub-headings, if appropriate, to guide the reader through your report.

Do not use headings for 'Research' or 'Structure and referencing', as you must integrate these elements throughout your report.

Your teacher or lecturer will ask you to start the project at a suitable point during the academic year.

There is no time limit for how long you can spend on your project. You can work on the project in the classroom and outwith your centre.

Getting started

- ♦ Select a topic that is:
  — of interest to you
  — from the published course content — if it is not, **you will not gain marks**
- ♦ Identify the organisation(s) or industry you want to write about.
- ♦ Discuss your choices with your teacher or lecturer before making a final decision. They can advise if:
  — you will be able to gather enough information
  — the topic is suitable — not too simple or too complex
- ♦ Think of the aim of your report — this should contain:
  — your organisation(s) or industry
  — your topic
  — who it will have an impact on
- ♦ Decide on a title for your report — there are examples in the course specification document to give you some ideas.

Using sources of information

- ♦ Choose a range of relevant research sources that could include:
  — websites
  — news articles, magazines, journals and/or books
  — audio and/or visual media
  — social media
- ♦ The majority of your research sources should be up to date (within 2 to 3 years).

Additional research sources could include a survey; however, you should think carefully before using primary research, as all questions must relate to the purpose of your report and the information must be robust. For information to be valid and robust, you should have 100 or more respondents and use random sampling or stratified random sampling. If you base your analysis and evaluation on findings from surveys or questionnaires with a limited number of respondents, it will be disregarded and **you will not gain marks**.

As soon as you start your research, keep a record of **all** the sources you look up to save time later. One way to do this is to paste every URL into in a Word document, along with the date accessed, or note the author and title of any printed source. This is helpful if you need to refer back to a website, and it will also help you when selecting the sources for your footnotes and your bibliography.

Writing the report

Introduction (5 marks)

Your introduction must:

♦ clearly state the aim of the report
♦ describe the core activity(s) of the organisation(s) or industry
♦ give detailed reasons why the report is appropriate

You could include:

♦ scene-setting information and/or an overview about the topic
♦ information about what the organisation(s) or industry does
♦ the question, problem or issue
♦ a breakdown of how the question, problem or issue will be addressed in the report
♦ reasons why the report is appropriate, for example the suitability of the topic area, organisation(s) or industry, and/or the link between the topic and organisation(s) or industry

Analysis and evaluation (20 marks)

This section is the main part of your report and is likely to be quite lengthy. If you think it would be helpful for your reader, you could divide the text under your main 'Analysis and evaluation' heading into sub-sections, using appropriate sub-headings.

Your analysis and evaluation points should:

♦ be backed by research evidence:
  — There are no marks for analysis or evaluation that come from research findings that are not referenced.
  — There are no marks for analysis that is not based on findings.
  — There are no marks for analysis or based on findings which are beyond the 2 to 3-year limit.
♦ be clearly linked to the topic of your report
♦ be logical:
  — It should be obvious that your analysis is referring back to your title.
  — You should plan your points so that they flow for the reader.
  — Your report can use any sub-heading structure you choose; however, you should use logical sequencing for your main points.

You could:

♦ use relevant information from, for example news articles, websites, videos, and/or books
♦ use information from diagrams, charts, graphs, infographics, and/or images

- use relevant business theories and/or concepts that clarify and/or explain your research information
- make comparisons between different organisations
- give opinions based on logical reasoning

Conclusions and recommendations (8 marks)

You must provide main conclusions and/or recommendations that address the aim that you gave at the start of your report.

Your conclusions and recommendations must:

- be based on your analysis and evaluation
- be linked to the aim and/or the topic of your report
- **not** introduce any new material

Any conclusion could be:

- drawn together from more than one point of analysis
- based on logical reasoning

All recommendations:

- must be justified
- must be based on logical reasoning
- could show why the option chosen is better than an alternative
- could explain any limitations

Research (3 marks)

Your research sources must:

- use **a minimum** of four sources (there is no restriction on the number of sources you can use)
- be integrated throughout the report, and not under a separate section heading
- be relevant to the topic
- be up to date

You can attach a maximum of four pages of appendices of research evidence, if appropriate. Your bibliography **does not** count towards the maximum of four pages.

No marks are awarded for appendices in their own right. However, if you have relevant supporting information that you feel would be useful to the reader, but you think it would disrupt the flow if you included it in the body of your report, you can include it as an appendix.

Structure and referencing (4 marks)

Your report must:

- use the specified section headings ('Introduction', 'Analysis and evaluation', and 'Conclusions and recommendations')
- be in a consistent font
- have page numbers

You must:

- use appropriate business terminology throughout your report
- use footnotes for facts and/or figures in the 'Introduction' section
- use footnotes for all your findings in the 'Analysis and evaluation' section to show their source (see the guidelines for footnotes at the end of this document)
- include a full bibliography for all your sources (see the guidelines for referencing at the end of this document)

In addition to the requirements listed above, you should:

- use 1.5 or 2 line spacing
- use a readable, clear font (for example Trebuchet, Arial, Times New Roman or Candara)
- use font size 12

Guidance on referencing and appendices

The purpose of referencing is to:

- show clearly which ideas or words are not your own
- provide enough information for someone else to find the source of those ideas or words
- present information consistently

The guidelines below are based on the Harvard referencing system. However, you can use any approach if you use it consistently.

Footnotes

You should insert footnotes for each finding you source, for example facts, quotes, diagrams, illustrations, and/or images.

Your footnotes should run sequentially throughout the document and should not restart for each chapter or section.

Citing footnotes

Footnotes should follow the same format as bibliographies, with the important exception that in footnotes an author's initials or forename precedes, rather than follows, the surname.

If you use the same book or journal source for a second or subsequent time, you should only use the author's surname, title and page number as a new footnote.

If you use the same website reference for a second or subsequent time, you should reinsert the URL as a new footnote.

Bibliography

You should include a bibliography at the end of your report, in alphabetical order of author's surname. If you wish, you can split the bibliography into sub-headings of print sources and website sources.

Bibliography styles

Books:
<author's surname>, <initials>. <year of publication> in brackets, <title> in italics, <edition — if not the first>, <place of publication: publisher>, <page number (if relevant)>

For example:
Hannagan, T. (2012), *Management Concepts and Practices*, 3rd ed, Harlow: Prentice Hall, p39

Journals and periodicals:
<author's surname>, <initials>. <year of publication> in brackets, <title of article> in single inverted commas, <journal title> in italics, <volume> <issue> in brackets, <page numbers>

For example:
Evans, W.A. (1994) 'Approaches to intelligent information retrieval', *Information Processing and Management*, 7 (2), p147–168

Internet:
<*author's/editor's surname>, <initials>. <year> in brackets, <article title> in italics, <online> in square brackets, <place of publication: publisher>. <Available from: URL> <accessed date> in square brackets

*Note: the author may be an organisation, and you may not always be able to find the place/publisher; provide as much detail as possible.

For example:
Academic Services (2007), *BU guide to citation in the Harvard style: brief guide* [online], Poole: Bournemouth University. Available from: https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/discover/library/using-library/how-guides/how-cite-references [accessed 06 February 2018]

Podcasts:
<author's/narrator's surname>, <initials>. <title of podcast> in single inverted commas, <podcast> in square brackets, <date posted> in brackets, <publisher>. <Available from: URL> <accessed date> in square brackets

For example:
Harford, T. '50 things that made the modern economy' [podcast], (13 May 2019), BBC. Available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csz2wb [accessed 20 May 2019]

TV programmes and documentaries:
<title of programme> in italics, <channel or publisher> <year produced> in brackets. <Available from: URL> <accessed date> in square brackets

For example:
Dispatches: Secrets of Cadbury, Channel 4 (2017). Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njgW-c3fAUk [accessed 15 February 2017]

Appendices

You do not gain marks for appendices in their own right.

Appendices could be maps, tables, and primary research sources such as questionnaire questions and a summary of answers in graphical or tabular format, or interview questions and notes on responses.

You should use appendices:

♦ if including the information in the body of the report would disrupt the reader's flow
♦ if the volume of information is too much to include in the body of the report, for example a multi-page spreadsheet
♦ to verify findings from any primary research

You should only include information that you have referenced in the body of the report.

Administrative information

Published: August 2024 (version 1.2)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Minor changes to: ♦ 'Structure and referencing' in the 'Detailed marking instructions' section (deleted 'and page numbers') ♦ 'Using sources of information' in the 'Instructions for candidates' section (inserted 'within 2–3 years') ♦ 'Structuring and referencing' in the 'Instructions for candidates' section (deleted reference to front cover)	July 2023
1.2	Minor changes to: ♦ 'Analysis and evaluation' in the 'Detailed marking instructions' section, and the 'Instructions for candidates' section, to highlight the 2 to 3-year limit for findings ♦ 'Research' in the 'Detailed marking instructions' section, to remove some examples ('field trips and/or visiting speakers' and 'interviews, surveys and/or questionnaires'), and add text to the 'Instructions for candidates' section to clarify the requirements if candidates use information from primary sources ♦ 'Conclusions and recommendations', in the 'Detailed marking instructions' section, to clarify text on drawing valid conclusions ♦ 'Project section' heading added to 'Detailed marking instructions' table	August 2024

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

Security and confidentiality

This document can be used by SQA approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.