

# Higher Business Management Question Paper Audio Presentation Transcript

## Slide 1

Hello, my name is Karin Coltart, the subject implementation manager for Business and Economics. In this presentation I'm going to talk about the structure of a SQA Higher Business Management question paper.

## Slide 2

This presentation will take you through the factors that make up a SQA Higher Business Management paper in terms of duration, structure, content, command words and level of demand.

## Slide 3

The SQA Higher Business Management question paper is 2 hours and 45 minutes long and asks 90 marks worth of questions. If a centre is using a question paper out of less than 90 marks for an in-house assessment, the time allowed should be altered. If a centre is using an assessment of less than 90 marks or if sitting a 90 mark assessment is split over several occasions, the overall level of demand may become easier as candidates have less material to revise.

If 15 minutes of the 2 hour and 45 minute duration is taken up with reading the case study in Section One, it leaves two and a half hours for answering questions. On a purely arithmetic model, the Higher Business Management paper works out at just over a minute and a half per mark.

However, not all questions will take the same amount of time to answer. For example, a one mark 'describe a method of growth' question takes less time to answer than one mark for 'explain the benefit of using a spreadsheet to prepare financial statements' question. These factors should be taken into account by centres when considering an appropriate length of time for an in-house assessment.

## Slide 4

An SQA Higher Business Management question paper covers all five areas of study, namely 'understanding business', 'marketing', 'operations', 'people' and 'finance'.

## Slide 5

An SQA Higher Business Management paper is made up of two sections.

The first section is a case study with 30 marks worth of questions which can be on any of the five areas of study. Questions in Section One range from one to a maximum of eight marks. The second section contains four 15 mark questions, each of which can either cover a single area of study or can integrate two or more areas.

Questions in Section Two can range from one to a maximum of eight marks.

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There's no definitive list of command words that can be used in a SQA Higher Business Management question paper. The words in the table are the command words that are most commonly used.

*Words listed in the table: define, describe, discuss, justify, compare, distinguish, explain.*

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An SQA Higher Business Management paper aims to have a range of questions that cover different levels of demand so that some questions are accessible to all candidates and some

are difficult enough only to be accessible to candidates who would expect to get an A grade pass.

The table here shows targets, so a candidate who would expect to be awarded a C grade pass should be able to answer about half the marks in the paper.

About a third of the marks should be challenging enough so that only candidates who expect to get an A grade pass should be able to get those marks.

*Information found in the table: Level of demand. Accessibility: A-type candidates.*

*Approximate percentage of marks: 30%. Approximate number of marks: 27 marks.*

*Accessibility: B-type candidates. Approximate percentage of marks: 20%. Approximate number of marks: 18 marks.*

*Accessibility: C-type candidates. Approximate percentage of marks: 50%. Approximate number of marks: 45 marks.*

### **Slide 8**

The level of demand of a question can change depending on a variety of factors, such as the wording of the question, the command word used, the number of marks the question is out of, how specific or general a question is, the topic the question is about and the number of possible answers that there could be for a question.

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Candidates need to read questions carefully as a given number, the use of the plural or the use of a singular in a question can indicate how many original points are needed or how many development points can be made.

### **Slide 10**

In this example, the command word changes. In the 'describe' version, a C grade candidate might give two descriptions, and a B grade candidate would get all three marks. In the 'explain' version, a C grade candidate might not access any marks whilst a B grade candidate might get one out of three and an A grade candidate would get three out of three.

### **Slide 11**

In this example, the command word stays the same, but the number of marks available for the question changes.

Often the more marks a question is out of, the more difficult the question is, as candidates need to have more knowledge to be able to give a full answer. Similarly, fewer marks in a question makes it easier, as less knowledge is required for full marks.

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In this example, the specificity of the question changes, in the first version of the slightly harder question a criteria has been added. So only answers that relate to a charity are allowed. Candidates therefore need to know (a) methods of growth and then (b) be able to recognise which methods of growth are suitable or unsuitable for a charity, which narrows the pool of possible correct answers.

In the second version of the slightly harder question, a specific number of methods is required, which takes away the opportunity for candidates to give development marks. If only two methods of growth are given, even though a lot of information is given about one of them, only two out of three marks can be awarded. Whereas in the starting question, the candidate could have developed a point about one method of growth and gained full marks.

### **Slide 13**

In this example, the topic of the question has changed. Some topics are considered to be harder than others.

For example, candidates often find 'the role of technology' a harder topic than 'pricing strategies'. Therefore, the number of marks that might be accessible to a C grade candidate would be fewer in a harder topic.

### **Slide 14**

In this example, the possible number of answers for each question has changed. There are a great many 'sources of finance' to choose from. For example 'retained profits', 'sale of assets', 'share issue', 'bank loan', 'commercial mortgage', 'debt factoring', 'sale of debentures', 'crowdfunding' etc for a three mark question.

Whereas there are basically four sectors of industry ie 'primary', 'secondary', 'tertiary' and 'quaternary' to choose from for three marks. This makes answering a question that has a wide choice of answers easier than one which has a limited number of correct answers.

### **Slide 15**

If you want to have a look at examples of marked candidate work and commentaries, you can use this link to go to the SQA Understanding Standards website.

<https://www.understandingstandards.org.uk/Subjects/BusinessManagement>

### **Slide 16**

Thank you for listening. I hope that you found this presentation useful for you.