



Higher  
Coursework  
Assessment Task



# Higher Business Management Assignment 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 2023-24 and until further notice.**

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# Introduction

This document contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the Higher Business Management assignment. You must read it in conjunction with the course specification.

This assignment is worth 30 marks. This is 25% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

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

# Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions for the Higher Business Management assignment 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 There is a penalty for exceeding the word count of 2,000 words by more than 10%. Do not include appendices, references and footnotes in this count.
- d The assignment has a total mark allocation of 30 marks, broken down into sections as follows:

### **Introduction (2 marks)**

Award marks for stating the purpose of the report and for providing relevant background information on the organisation.

### **Research (4 marks)**

Award marks for explaining the value(s) of research sources used.

### **Analysis and interpretation (13 marks)**

Award marks for making relevant analytical and/or interpretive points based on sourced findings.

### **Conclusions and recommendations (10 marks)**

Award marks for drawing justified conclusions and/or making justified recommendations, based on points already made in the 'analysis and interpretation' section.

### **Structure (1 mark)**

Award a mark for using appropriate headings, fonts and sizes.

## Marking overview

|   |  |                        |  |   |   |
|---|--|------------------------|--|---|---|
| Section 1:<br>introduction                |  |                        | <b>2 marks</b>   | <b>1 mark</b>   | <b>0 marks</b>  |
|   |  |                        | Purpose of the report clearly stated<br><br>Relevant background information provided | Purpose of the report clearly stated<br><b>or</b><br>Relevant background information provided | Purpose of the report unclear or not stated<br><br>No background information provided   |
| Section 2:<br>research                    | <b>4 marks</b>   | <b>3 marks</b>         | <b>2 marks</b>   | <b>1 mark</b>   | <b>0 marks</b>  |
|   | Four explained values from at least two research sources (field and/or desk) | Three explained values | Two explained values   | One explained value   | No values explained   |
| Section 3:<br>analysis and interpretation |  |                        |  | <b>1-13 marks</b>   | <b>0 marks</b>  |
|   |  |                        |  | Relevant analytical and/or interpretive comments made, based on sourced findings              | No analytical or interpretive comments made<br><b>or</b><br>Analytical and interpretive comments made, but unrelated to the purpose of the report |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Section 4:<br/>conclusions and<br/>recommendations</b> |  |  |  | <b>1-10 marks</b>  | <b>0 marks</b>   |
|   |  |  |  | Justified conclusions drawn and/or justified recommendations made, based on points made in 'analysis and interpretation' section of the report | No justified conclusions drawn and/or no justified recommendations made<br><b>or</b><br>Justified conclusions drawn and/or justified recommendations made, but unrelated to points made in 'analysis and interpretation' section of the report |
| <b>Section 5:<br/>structure</b>                           |  |  |  | <b>1 mark</b>  | <b>0 marks</b>   |
|   |  |  |  | Appropriate headings, fonts and sizes used   | No, or inappropriate, headings, fonts and sizes used   |

## Detailed marking instructions

|                                | Marking instructions   | Max mark | Additional guidance   |
|--------------------------------|--|----------|---|
| <b>Section 1: introduction</b> | <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for clearly stating the organisation chosen and the purpose of the report.</p> <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for providing relevant background information on the main activity or activities of the organisation.</p> | <b>2</b> | <p>Candidates clearly state the <b>organisation</b> and the <b>purpose</b> of the report, for example:</p> <p><i>I am investigating the effectiveness of the extended marketing mix of XXX.</i><br/> <b>(1P – 1 mark for purpose)</b></p> <p>They provide relevant <b>background information</b> on the organisation, for example:</p> <p><i>The main focus of XXX is selling clothes.</i><br/> <b>(1B – 1 mark for background information)</b></p> |

|                            | Marking instructions  | Max mark | Additional guidance  |
|----------------------------|---|----------|--|
| <b>Section 2: research</b> | <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for each explained value.</p> <p>If candidates use only <b>one</b> research source, award a maximum of 3 marks.</p> <p>Do not award marks for flipped or repeated explanations of different sources.</p> | <b>4</b> | <p>When explaining the value of a research source, candidates could focus on whether the source is, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ timely/up to date</li> <li>◆ accurate</li> <li>◆ complete</li> <li>◆ cost-effective</li> <li>◆ concise</li> <li>◆ objective/unbiased</li> </ul> <p>They <b>explain the value</b>, for example:</p> <p><i>The information in source 1 and 2 showed financial performance figures, which allowed a comparison to be made between XXX plc and YYY plc.</i><br/> <b>(1V – 1 mark for explained value)</b></p> <p><i>The information on the XXX plc website is up to date because it was last updated 2 months ago.</i><br/> <b>(1V – 1 mark for explained value)</b></p> |



|   | Marking instructions  | Max mark  | Additional guidance  |
|---|---|-----------|--|
| <b>Section 3:<br/>analysis and<br/>interpretation</b> | <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for each point of relevant analysis, interpretation and/or development, based on findings.</p> <p>Do not award marks for analysis and/or interpretation of a finding if not sourced. The source of each finding must be in the report or as an appendix.</p> <p>Watch for repetition of analysis, without different development.</p> | <b>13</b> | <p>Candidates must make their analytical and interpretive points from research, which can include text, displays, graphs and charts.</p> <p>They make a point of <b>analysis</b>, for example:</p> <p><i>The XXX website (see Appendix 1 for URL) shows a market share graph for the four main competitors within the sector. As YYY plc has the largest customer base, this suggests that YYY plc makes better use of its marketing mix than its competitors do. (1A – 1 mark for analysis).</i></p> <p>They make a point of <b>interpretation and analysis</b>, for example:</p> <p><i>My field study comparing a similar basket of goods from each of the four main competitors (see Appendix 2 for results table) shows that the total price of the basket ranges from £XX.XX – £XX.XX. As this is a very narrow price range, it suggests that YYY plc is using a competitive pricing strategy (1I – 1 mark for interpretation) and therefore must be competing for customers in other ways. (1A – 1 mark for analysis).</i></p> |

|   | Marking instructions   | Max mark  | Additional guidance   |
|---|--|-----------|---|
| <b>Section 4: conclusions and recommendations</b> | <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for each justified conclusion, based on the ‘analysis and interpretation’ section in the report.</p> <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for each justified recommendation, based on the ‘analysis and interpretation’ section in the report.</p> <p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for each development of a conclusion or recommendation.</p> <p>Candidates must not include new information in this section.</p> <p>Do not award marks for conclusions if the information is a repeat of what is in the ‘analysis and interpretation’ section of the report, with no attempt to summarise or evaluate.</p> | <b>10</b> | <p>Candidates draw <b>justified conclusions</b>, for example:</p> <p><i>I conclude that XXX plc has a successful extended marketing mix, which is shown by its increasing profits last year.</i><br/> <b>(1C – 1 mark for justified conclusion)</b></p> <p>They make <b>justified recommendations</b>, for example:</p> <p><i>I recommend that XXX plc continues to train its staff in how to provide good customer service because this will help to maintain high customer satisfaction ratings.</i><br/> <b>(1R – 1 mark for justified recommendation)</b></p> |
| <b>Section 5: structure</b>                       | Award <b>1 mark</b> for using appropriate headings, fonts and sizes in the report.   | <b>1</b>  |   |

# Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for Higher Business Management.

This assignment is worth 30 marks. This is 25% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ selecting an appropriate business and topic
- ◆ collecting information/evidence relating to the context of the assignment, from a range of sources
- ◆ applying relevant business concepts and theories to the context of the assignment
- ◆ analysing and evaluating the business data/information
- ◆ solving problems by applying relatively complex business ideas and concepts relevant to the context of the assignment
- ◆ communicating valid, justified conclusions and/or recommendations
- ◆ producing a business report relating to the context of the assignment

Marks for the assignment are as follows:

- |                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| ◆ introduction                    | 2 marks  |
| ◆ research                        | 4 marks  |
| ◆ analysis and interpretation     | 13 marks |
| ◆ conclusions and recommendations | 10 marks |
| ◆ structure                       | 1 mark   |

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 on an organisation and business issue of your choice. The organisation can operate in the private, public or third sector of the economy.

Your business report should be no longer than **2,000 words** (excluding appendices, references and footnotes) and should follow the section headings above. If your word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied.

You can include a maximum of four A4-sized pages of appendices; these **do not** count towards the 2,000 words.

You must give brief details of each research source. You can do this in the body of your report or as an appendix at the end.

Although you have a notional 8 hours in class to research and write up your report, you may carry out field research outwith the classroom in addition to this.

## Preparing your report

Use the following instructions to prepare your report. The tick boxes can help ensure you complete each section.

You may wish to use the 'Higher Business Management – assignment notes' to help you prepare your report, but this is optional. There is an example at the end of this document and on SQA's website under the 'Coursework' tab.

You must submit your report using the Higher Business Management template. Your teacher or lecturer will provide you with this.

### Section 1: introduction (2 marks)

- ◆ State your chosen organisation and the purpose of your report.
- ◆ Provide relevant background information on your organisation.

|                                 | ✓ |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Organisation and purpose        |   |
| Relevant background information |   |

### Section 2: research (4 marks)

- ◆ Explain the value of the research sources used.

You can use as many sources of information in your report as you like, but you only need to provide four explanations about the value of the information.

|          |                 | ✓ |
|----------|-----------------|---|
| Source 1 | Explained value |   |
| Source 2 | Explained value |   |
| Source 3 | Explained value |   |
| Source 4 | Explained value |   |

Sources may include, for example websites, newspapers, magazines, books, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, documentaries, podcasts, visiting speakers, and field trips.

For any source used, you must give brief details of each source in the body of your report or as an appendix, for example URL, book title.

You should not need to contact an organisation as part of your research. You can find most of the information you require for your report on organisations' websites and from other sources listed above.

If you use fewer than four sources, you must still provide four explained values. For example, if you use only two sources, you must provide two explained values for each source.

|          |                 |   |                 |   |
|----------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
|          |                 | ✓ |                 | ✓ |
| Source 1 | Explained value |   | Explained value |   |
| Source 2 | Explained value |   | Explained value |   |

### Section 3: analysis and interpretation (13 marks)

- ◆ Make 13 points of analysis and/or interpretation.
  - State your source, the relevant finding(s) and make point(s) of analysis and/or interpretation for each finding.
  - Your points of analysis and/or interpretation must link to the purpose of your report.
  - You must give brief details of the source of each finding in the body of your report, for example the XXX newspaper or in an appendix, for example the URL.
  - If it is possible to link the information together, you can combine information from different sources to make a stronger analytical point.

|                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                       | How many in your report? |
| Analysis and/or interpretation points |                          |

### Section 4: conclusions and recommendations (10 marks)

- ◆ Draw conclusions, justifying why you are drawing them.
- ◆ Make recommendations, justifying why you are able to make them.

You must base your conclusions and/or recommendations on points you have already made in the 'analysis and interpretation' section.

You must make 10 justified conclusions and/or justified recommendations and/or developments of these.

|   | How many in your report? |
|---|--------------------------|
| Justified conclusions                     |                          |
| Developments of justified conclusions     |                          |
| Justified recommendations                 |                          |
| Developments of justified recommendations |                          |

### Section 5: structure (1 mark)

- ◆ Use the headings from sections 1-4 to structure your report.
  - You must use consistent fonts and sizes throughout your report.

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
|                           | ✓ |
| Headings, fonts and sizes |   |

You should:

- ◆ use 1.5 line spacing
- ◆ use a readable, clear font
- ◆ use a font size of 12
- ◆ check that all page footers are numbered
- ◆ insert your SCN in the template footer
- ◆ insert your report title in the template header
- ◆ not staple your pages together

## Higher Business Management – assignment notes

You can use this to record your research and analysis, and to help you prepare your final report. If you need additional space, you can add more rows to any of the tables.

You can download a copy from SQA's website under the 'Coursework' tab.

### Introduction (2 marks)

|                                 | Notes |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Organisation and purpose        |       |
| Relevant background information |       |

### Research (4 marks)

| Source | Explained value |
|--------|-----------------|
|        |                 |
|        |                 |
|        |                 |
|        |                 |

### Analysis and interpretation (13 marks)

| Source | Finding | Analysis and/or interpretation point(s):<br>(for example this shows that ... this means that ... this suggests that ... this leads to ... therefore ... the impact is ...) |
|--------|---------|--|
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |

| Source | Finding | Analysis and/or interpretation point(s):<br>(for example this shows that ... this means that ... this suggests that ... this leads to ... therefore ... the impact is ...) |
|--------|---------|--|
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |
|        |         |  |

**Conclusions and recommendations (10 marks)**

| Conclusion, recommendation or development | Justification |
|---|---------------|
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |
|   |               |



### Structure (1 mark)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
|                           | ✓ |
| Headings, fonts and sizes |   |

### Recommended style

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
|                       | ✓ |
| Report title          |   |
| 1.5 line spacing      |   |
| Readable, clear font  |   |
| Font size 12          |   |
| Page footers numbered |   |
| SCN inserted          |   |
| Not stapled           |   |

# Administrative information

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## History of changes

| Version | Description of change  | Date           |
|---------|--|----------------|
| 1.1     | Minor amendments made to the 'Instructions for candidates' section.  | September 2019 |
| 1.2     | Minor amendments made to section 2 of the 'Marking overview', and section 1 and section 2 of the 'Detailed marking instructions'.          | August 2022    |
| 1.3     | Minor change to 'Conclusions and recommendations' in the 'Detailed marking instructions' section (example in additional guidance removed). | July 2023      |
|         |  |                |

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.

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