

NextGen: HN unit specification

Managing Business Culture and Strategy (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: JMOB 48

SCQF level: 8 (16 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit improves learners' understanding of business strategy and how to develop and manage it in the culture of an organisation. It highlights the dynamic nature of the business environment and the role that business strategy and organisational culture can play in improving the long-term performance of an organisation.

It is suitable for learners studying administration and business. It is primarily intended for learners who want to pursue a career or further study in business management or administration but is also appropriate for those who want to develop their management skills.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Before starting the unit, we recommend learners have one or more of the following:

- a relevant qualification or units at SCQF level 7
- HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies
- knowledge of organisational structures and the factors that influence employee behaviour at work

This is a mandatory optional unit in Higher National Diploma (HND) Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies. Learners can also study it on a stand-alone basis.

Learners who complete the unit as part of the HND can progress to degree-level study or find employment in senior administration or supervisory roles in a business environment.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. assess the relationship between organisational culture and organisational behaviour
2. explain the influence of business strategy on organisational behaviour
3. explain how to manage effectively a changing business strategy
4. analyse the behavioural skills and techniques required to manage a business strategy

Evidence requirements

Assess all outcomes under unsupervised, open-book conditions.

You must ensure authenticity and originality of all submitted work.

Outcome 1

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain, for a particular organisation, the organisational elements of:
 - shared values
 - taken-for-granted assumptions
- provide **one** example of each organisational culture element and explain why the example illustrates the element in a particular organisation
- apply a model of organisational culture to a particular organisation
- use a model of organisational culture to assess the relationship between organisational culture and organisational behaviour in a particular organisation
- compare the management approaches associated with **two** different types of organisational culture

Outcome 2

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain **two** different business strategies and the business environment they are appropriate for
- explain the connection between business strategy and strategic choice in a particular organisation
- compare the influence of **two** different business strategies on the behaviour of a particular organisation

Outcome 3

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain, with reference to the internal and external 'forces for change', why the strategy of a particular organisation may have to change over time
- identify and evaluate **two** business improvement models that management can use to gain competitive advantage
- explain the reasons why management can experience resistance when changing a business strategy
- advise management, referring to an established conceptual framework, how to overcome resistance to change

Outcome 4

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain the importance of assertiveness, negotiation and influencing skills during the strategic planning process
- identify and analyse **one** assertiveness, negotiation and influencing theoretical approach that could help management throughout the strategic planning process
- develop guidelines on how to manage an effective business strategy meeting
- identify **two** causes of conflict that can arise from the strategic planning process and for each, describe the potential effects of such conflicts

- propose ways to resolve each conflict identified
- identify and analyse a recognised problem-solving model to facilitate decision making during the strategic planning process
- identify **two** causes of stress in relation to managing a business strategy and explain the potential effects of such causes
- advise management on how to address each cause of stress

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: - the elements of organisational culture - models of organisational culture - relationships between organisational culture and organisational behaviour	Outcome 1 Learners can: - apply a recognised organisational culture model (for example Handy, Hofstede, Trompenaars, Deal and Kennedy) to a real-world organisation - compare management approaches across contrasting organisational cultures
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: - business strategies - the connection between business strategy and 'strategic choice' - how business strategy influences organisational behaviour	Outcome 2 Learners can: - distinguish between alternative business strategies and the business environment they are appropriate for - interpret strategic choice in a specific organisational context - compare behavioural implications of different business strategies

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: - the relationship between business strategy and the internal and external environment - business improvement models and competitive advantage - key issues when changing a business strategy in an organisation - the role of management during the change process - mechanisms for overcoming resistance to change	Outcome 3 Learners can: - analyse internal and external forces for change using situational analysis tools, such as: - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) - political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTEL) - select and evaluate improvement frameworks, for example: - EFQM - Balanced Scorecard - Performance Prism - recommend change approaches and tactics to address resistance
Outcome 4 Learners should understand: - assertiveness, influencing and negotiation techniques - how to manage meetings and handle conflict - problem-solving techniques and decision-making techniques - stress management	Outcome 4 Learners can: - use assertiveness, negotiation and influencing techniques appropriately - plan and facilitate effective strategy meetings - apply a recognised problem-solving model to strategic decisions - identify stressors and propose coping strategies for self and others

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - demonstrating good time management while carrying out research
 - managing assessment timelines effectively
- integrity:
 - carrying out research ethically and responsibly
 - being aware of plagiarism and using accurate citations and references
- adapting:
 - developing and applying new theoretical knowledge related to a range of topics
 - using a variety of digital technologies to complete assessments
- initiative:
 - coming up with ideas and identifying areas for further enquiry
 - collecting relevant information by using library resources and facilities effectively

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - communicating ideas clearly and effectively
 - producing assessment evidence that is appropriate and easy to understand
 - sharing ideas and perspectives on a range of concepts
- feeling:
 - considering the emotions and perspectives of others when planning and completing tasks
- collaborating:
 - developing positive working relationships with peers

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - independently sourcing relevant information
 - using online research tools effectively
 - actively contributing to class discussions
 - critically evaluating information and research evidence
- sense-making:
 - developing an understanding of a range of topics
 - evaluating a range of ideas and evidence

- critical thinking:
 - making logical connections and reasoned judgements
 - drawing conclusions based on evidence
 - reviewing and evaluating research evidence

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory optional unit in HND Administration Management and Digital Business Technologies. You can deliver it as a stand-alone unit or partially integrate it with other units in the HND.

The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. However, you should consider all outcomes together when you deliver the unit. The notional time for delivery and assessment is 80 hours.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

This unit provides learners with the knowledge and skills for further study in business management or administration. It:

- highlights the dynamic nature of the business environment and the role that business strategy can play in improving the long-term performance of an organisation
- looks at the part organisational culture plays in the developing and implementing the strategy
- considers the impact of risk and change, and how this affects business strategy and organisational culture

The unit covers all types of organisations, including organisations of different sizes, public and private organisations, and organisations operating in different markets. It improves learners':

- understanding of the management theory relating to:
 - business culture
 - business strategy
 - behavioural skills
 - managing change
- ability to provide practical advice on how to manage:
 - business culture
 - business strategy
 - change

There are several different theories and models that you can use to illustrate the content of this unit, and learners can use to explain and analyse the situation in a particular organisation. The following gives some guidance on suitable content. It is not exhaustive or prescriptive.

Outcome 1 content

Shared values are reflected in mission statements and objectives, and are often expressed through high-profile symbols such as logos and corporate dress codes.

Taken-for-granted assumptions are the underlying, unconscious beliefs within an organisation. Low-profile symbols, which reflect these assumptions, include stories, organisational practices, jargon, and rituals and routines.

Shared values guide behaviour and best practice, while symbols (high and low profile) express and differentiate organisational culture, and taken-for-granted assumptions form the deepest level of that culture.

Models of culture could include those suggested by Handy, Hofstede, Trompenaars and Deal and Kennedy.

Outcome 2 content

Strategic choices relate to decisions made by an organisation on what strategy to follow. Learners should recognise that strategy has several levels (such as business and corporate) and can be approached in different ways, including:

- a contrast between external and internal approaches:
 - the external approach involves finding and defending a particular market position
 - the internal approach centres on developing and maintaining internal capabilities that evolve with the organisation

- different types of generic strategy, such as:
 - rational
 - flexible
 - incremental
 - creative
 - behavioural
 - evolutionary

Learners do not need detailed knowledge of the different ways strategies can be approached for this unit, but it may help them appreciate the complexity of the issues.

Possible strategies include:

- Porter's cost leadership, cost focus, differentiation and focused differentiation strategies
- Mintzberg's deliberate and emergent strategy
- related and unrelated diversification
- new product development
- improved market penetration
- seeking new markets
- removing some operations

Learners can use models such as the Boston Matrix to identify suitable strategies.

Outcome 3 content

The relationship between potential changes in business strategy and the organisational environment considers both micro and macro factors. For example:

- changes in organisation structure, management styles can be contributory micro factors
- PESTEL factors can provide a rationale for macro influences

Measuring and managing business performance

Business improvement models can help organisations gain competitive advantage, for example:

- EFQM
- Balanced Scorecard
- Performance Prism

Several contributing factors can influence how change is managed in an organisation, including:

- stakeholder power
- business goals
- organisation culture
- business ethics and social responsibility

Analysing and implementing change

There are many models for analysing change in an organisation and for overcoming resistance to change including Lewin's force field analysis and the change equation (that is, when current dissatisfaction plus shared vision of the future plus an acceptable first step outweigh the costs of change). Other models stress that the various parts of an organisation are inter-connected, and this should be considered when analysing the possibility of change.

The analysis of change can also be linked to implementing change.

There are different versions of the preparing–changing–consolidating model such as Lewin's unfreezing and refreezing model.

Kotter and Schlesinger's change continuum can help to decide what strategy to adopt for change and how resistance can be overcome. They also suggest several ways of overcoming resistance to change, including:

- communication and education
- participation and involvement

- support and development
- negotiation and bargaining
- manipulation and co-option
- explicit and implicit coercion

Outcome 4 content

Assertiveness skills

- distinction between assertiveness, aggression and passiveness and idea of the Bill of Assertive Rights
- assertive techniques such as 'broken record' and 'fogging'
- assertive behaviours such as:
 - challenging (seeking, asking, checking)
 - standing up for yourself
- coping with put-downs
- receiving constructive criticism
- recognising barriers to action
- thinking realistically
- communicating what you want

Negotiating strategies

- what negotiation is and the managerial situations where it can be used
- approaches to negotiation, for example win-win
- positive behaviours in negotiation:
 - asking questions
 - motives commentary
 - testing understanding
 - summarising
 - flagging behaviour

- negative behaviours in negotiation:

- defend/attack spirals
- irritators
- counter-proposals

Influencing strategies

- what influencing is and the managerial situations where it can be used
- sources of power and the balance of power
- influencing strategies, for example:
 - general approaches like 'push' and 'pull'
 - more specific strategies such as reason, assertion, exchange of benefits, coercion, courting favour, and partnership

Conducting meetings

- purpose of meetings
- different types of meetings, for example:
 - giving information
 - gathering information
 - problem solving
- preparation for a meeting, for example:
 - documentation
 - what is expected to be accomplished at the meeting
 - start and finish time
 - who should be invited
- conduct of a meeting, for example:
 - begin on time
 - stick to agenda
 - minute taking

- effective behaviour of participants, for example:
 - keep to the point
 - summarise
 - allow others to speak
- effective behaviour of chair, for example:
 - summarising
 - gatekeeping

Conflict

Causes of conflict could include:

- formation of cliques
- group pressure and stereotypes
- patterns of communication
- breaking relationship rules
- personality clashes
- gender and age differences
- assumptions about others
- misuse of authority
- power tactics and manipulation
- general expectations and beliefs
- misunderstandings
- unreasonable beliefs and assumptions

Effects of conflict can be:

- positive, for example:
 - strengthening a relationship
 - greater trust
 - increased self-esteem
 - improved creativity and productivity
 - job satisfaction

- negative, for example:
 - reduced personal and organisation performance
 - damage to physical and emotional wellbeing
 - loss of confidence
 - lowered self-esteem
 - high stress levels
 - absenteeism
 - addiction
 - poor attitudes to work

Approaches to conflict can include:

- ignoring it
- allowing it to continue
- reducing or containing the conflict
- resolving it
- preventing it in the first place

Preventing conflict tends to be longer-term approaches involving things like establishing common objectives, mutual problem solving and improving methods of communication.

Problem solving and decision making

- problem solving as one of a manager's technical skills
- classification of problems, for example:
 - recurring and new
 - programmed and non-programmed
- rational decision making and problem-solving model:
 - identify problem
 - decide on criteria for a solution
 - gather information
 - identify alternative solutions

- evaluate alternative solutions
- choose best solution against criteria
- implement and review
- problem-solving techniques, for example
 - modify
 - minimise
 - substitute
 - rearrange
 - reverse
 - combine
 - brainstorming
- managerial actions to solve problems:
 - recognising the existence of a problem
 - acknowledging the problem
 - involving the other party
 - understanding each other's position
 - enlisting their co-operation
 - discussing possible solutions
 - planning action
 - resolving the problem in a mutually acceptable way

Stress management

- difference between stress and pressure
- causes of stress, for example:
 - role conflict
 - role ambiguity
 - role overload
 - role underload

- measures of stress, for example:
 - questionnaires
 - tests to identify stressors
- effects of stress, for example:
 - on managerial behaviour
 - on health
- managing your own stress, for example:
 - gaining control of time
 - effective communication
 - practical ways to relax
 - being healthy and fit
 - eating for health
 - exercise for stamina
 - suppleness and strength
 - hobbies and personal interests
 - work-life balance

Helping others manage their stress

- recognising signs of stress in others
- identifying causes of stress in others and suitable ways to address it, for example:
 - joint problem solving
 - counselling
 - using outside agencies

Resources

Access to digital resources.

Approaches to delivery

You can deliver this unit in person or online. Learners should be able to work independently through the unit content and assessments.

The overall unit delivery time is a notional 80 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. The notional time for self-directed study is 80 hours.

Approaches to assessment

Learners complete all assessment tasks for this unit under unsupervised, open-book conditions. Assessments should therefore be sufficiently contextualised and personalised to reduce the risk of plagiarism and to allow learners to demonstrate independent understanding and application of knowledge.

You can assess outcomes individually or together, as appropriate. When assessing outcomes together, ensure the learners clearly meet the evidence requirements for each outcome.

General guidance on assessment at SCQF level 8

Assessment at SCQF level 8 should require learners to demonstrate more than factual knowledge or to give more than a description. Learners should show they can:

- analyse concepts, models and frameworks
- apply theoretical knowledge to realistic organisational or workplace scenarios
- explain the rationale for decisions, approaches and tools used
- reflect on learning and skills development
- present information in a clear, structured and professional manner

Acceptable forms of evidence include:

- analytical reports
- structured essays
- extended-response questions

- case-study analyses
- project briefs and planning documents
- digital portfolios

The specific assessment format is at your discretion, provided that all evidence requirements are met.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Information for learners

Managing Business Culture and Strategy (SCQF level 8)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the unit
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

The unit improves your:

- understanding of the management theory relating to business culture, business strategy, and the management of change
- ability to provide practical advice on how to manage:
 - business culture
 - business strategy
 - change

Before you start the unit, we recommend you have one or more of the following:

- a relevant qualification or units at SCQF level 7
- HNC Administration and Digital Business Technologies
- knowledge of organisational structures and the factors that influence employee behaviour at work

During the unit, you:

- investigate the relationship between organisational culture and organisational behaviour
- examine the influence of business strategy on organisational behaviour
- investigate how business strategy and change is managed in organisations

- explore the behavioural skills and techniques that a manager needs during the strategic planning process
- develop meta-skills in a vocational or academic context

You can focus your study on organisations and examples that are relevant to you.

There is flexibility to study, as appropriate, organisations of different types and sizes, including public and private organisations, and those operating in different markets.

To successfully complete the unit, you produce evidence that you can assess the strategy, culture and change of an organisation. To do this, you apply the concepts you have learned during the unit to a particular organisation.

If you complete the unit as part of the HND, you can progress to degree-level study or find employment in senior administration or supervisory roles in a business environment.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the administration sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - demonstrating good time management while conducting research
 - managing assessment timelines effectively

- integrity:
 - carrying out research ethically and responsibly
 - being aware of plagiarism and using accurate citations and references
- adapting:
 - developing and applying new theoretical knowledge related to a range of topics
 - using a variety of digital technologies to complete assessments
- initiative:
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 - critically evaluating information and research evidence
- sense-making:
 - developing an understanding of a range of topics
 - evaluating a range of ideas and evidence
- critical thinking:
 - making logical connections and reasoned judgements
 - drawing conclusions based on evidence

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the administration sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Administrative information

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Superclass: AB

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check [our website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

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