



GCSE

Business Studies



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Introduction

Welcome to your Business Studies GCSE course! This Introduction is intended to guide you on all aspects of your course and you will need to refer to it as you work through the course.

The Choice of Syllabus for Business Studies

The course has been written to match the Business Studies GCSE 'B' syllabus set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA). This is syllabus AQA 3133. AQA combines the old examining boards SEG and NEAB.

But whichever board you are linked to, you will need to check the syllabus very closely. Full details of the current specification are given below.

Supporting Textbooks

The Oxford Open Learning study pack is designed to be a complete preparation for your GCSE examination and there is no compulsory supporting textbook.

However, it is never a bad idea to get a different perspective on the subject and the students who do best have generally read the most widely. Here are some books which are worth buying or borrowing from the library:

David Butler: *Business Studies* (OUP, ISBN 0198327978)

Renee Huggett: *Business Studies for GCSE* (Collins ISBN 0003273881)

I. Chambers, L. Hall & S. Squires: *Business Studies* (Longman ISBN 0582309026)

The first book, in particular, provides a very straightforward introduction to the basic topics. The second is more advanced but fills in a great deal of detail. One easy way to purchase supporting texts is through the OOL website (www.ool.co.uk).

The Arrangement of Lessons

The OOL course consists of seven modules and twenty lessons in total. The lessons are arranged as follows:

Module One: The External Environment and Business

Lesson	Title
1	Business in the Community and its Environment
2	External Factors affecting Business
3	Enterprise Culture
	Tutor-marked Assignment A

Module Two: The Ownership and Control of Business

Lesson	Title
4	Forms of Business: Ownership and Operation
5	Comparing Businesses
6	Growth
	Tutor-marked Assignment B

Module Three: The Aims and Objectives of Business

Lesson	Title
7	Business Objectives

Module Four: The Management of People within a Business

Lesson	Title
8	The Structure of Organisations
9	Methods of Management
	Tutor-marked Assignment C
10	Problems of Management
11	The Role of Personnel Management

Module Five: Accounting and Finance

Lesson	Title
12	Sources and Uses of Finance Tutor-marked Assignment D
13	Planning
14	Profitability, Liquidity and Finance

Module Six: Production

Lesson	Title
15	Resources and the Production Chain
16	Production Strategies Tutor-marked Assignment E
17	Location Decisions

Module Seven: Marketing

Lesson	Title
18	Market Planning and Research Tutor-marked Assignment F
19	The Marketing Mix
20	External Constraints on Marketing Tutor-marked Assignment G

Preliminary Information

This course has been specifically written to meet the requirements of GCSE examinations. The GCSE examination now requires a greater *application* of knowledge and the course therefore includes test questions designed to encourage students to engage in their own research and also to apply knowledge at each stage to that which they have gained earlier in the course.

It is not sufficient to learn the course material off parrot fashion since the GCSE requires student involvement and the ability to reason. They also expect you to relate the subject of

business to your own lives and, where possible, at school or in the economic world of work.

The lesson material, however, must not be regarded as complete in itself nor as a substitute for other reading. Students should also read the business aspects of a daily newspaper and listen to the economic and financial news as it occurs. Business is a subject which changes from day to day and text books rapidly become out of date.

While both the course material (and other textbooks) are updated frequently, changes can occur inside a matter of days which will not be reflected in the course material. It is therefore important that you keep abreast of the major changes from the daily newspaper.

Assessment Schedule

At the end of each lesson you will find a self-assessment test or a tutor-marked assignment. **Self-Assessment Tests**, as the name suggests, are designed to be marked by students themselves. These tests cover some or all of the topics of that particular lesson. Suggested answers to these tests are to be found at the back of the course.

Tutor-marked Assignments are to be found at the end of each of the modules. These are usually more extensive than the SATs and may require skills or knowledge derived from earlier lessons. Again, there are sets of suggested answers. These are supplied at the back of the course but should normally be retained by the tutor before the student starts work on the course. Make sure that this has happened! TMAs should be attempted under examination conditions.

Besides the formal tests, there are also a number of **Activities** which are located within each of the lessons. These Activities are arranged so that there may be an appropriate space for you to write in your answer. Activities may involve writing something down, performing some task, or just thinking about a problem.

In some cases there are answers to the activities. These may be found at the end of the lesson or immediately after the activity itself.

AQA Syllabus 3133

Syllabus 3133 is one of two AQA Business Studies syllabuses and it is also called Specification B to distinguish it from the other one (3132). Specification B requires candidates to take two written papers (1 and 3). In addition candidates may take *either* coursework which can be on a theme taken from any area of the Subject Content, *or* an alternative written paper (2).

The alternative written paper is **compulsory for private candidates** and more convenient for most students following this course in schools. This is why Specification B has been preferred to Specification A where coursework is compulsory.

There are two tiers of Assessment, Foundation (G-C grades) and Higher (D-A* grades). This course is aimed primarily at students aiming for the Higher Tier but the same topics are covered for both tiers and you do not need to decide at this stage which tier you will enter for.

Written Paper 1 37½% of total marks

Foundation and Higher Tiers 1¼ hours

Structured questions based on a case study of a business situation.

Written Paper 2 25% of total marks Coursework or an extra written paper

Coursework (if attempted) consists of a single problem-solving assignment of approximately 2000 words. Candidates will be expected to investigate and propose a solution to a business problem or hypothesis.

The alternative Written Paper 2 lasts for 1 hour at both Foundation and Higher levels. This will be a problem-solving exercise based on the use of given data about a business problem. It will be assessed using the same criteria as coursework.

Written Paper 3 37½% of total marks

Foundation and Higher Tiers 1¼ hours

This paper will consist of structured questions set on two or more unseen business case studies. The case studies will be issued with the paper.

Summary of Subject Content

This course (like the syllabus) concerns the business aspects of organisations within their economic, political and social contexts. Business Studies involves the investigation of how enterprise adds value by organizing the production of goods and services. The performance of business is studied from a range of perspectives. Using case studies, your course ensures that you have knowledge, understanding and experience of the real world of business organisations. The use of case study materials also requires that you use a variety of methods to analyse and evaluate this evidence and thus make reasoned judgements in the context of real business scenarios.

Module One, External Environment and Business, provides an overarching set of concepts which, when taken together with Module Two, The Ownership and Control of Business, and Module Three, The Aims and Objectives of Business, sets out the possible aims and objectives for these forms of business organization.

These first three modules provide a context within which the remainder of the Subject Content is to be studied. There is no optional content and the remaining four modules, Modules 4-7, The Management of People within a Business, Accounting & Finance, Production, and Marketing, should receive approximately the same amount of study time.

The Subject Content and the way it is set out attempt to match the way that real world business operates. In particular a specific emphasis on enterprise culture is included in Module One as well as receiving additional reference in other sections. The specific topics required by the 3133 syllabus, under each of these seven module headings, are given in the Aims sections that are to be found at the start of each lesson.

Grade Descriptions

There are eight possible grades at GCSE: A* (“A starred”), A, B, C, D, E, F and G. The bottom two grades indicate a very poor performance and you should expect to aim much higher than that. It is generally agreed that a grade B at GCSE is equivalent to a good pass in the old ‘O’ level examination and a grade C is the absolute minimum if you want to go on to ‘A’ level. This course is best for students aiming for grades A*-D.

Studying the Syllabus

You should be sure to acquire your own copy of the syllabus, either via the AQA Publications Dept or from the website www.aqa.org.uk.

The syllabus can be purchased from

Publications,
AQA, Aldon House,
39, Heald Grove,
Rusholme,
Manchester
M14 4NA (tel: 0161-953-1170)

or downloaded from www.aqa.org.uk/qual/pdf/AQA3122WSP.pdf.

As you approach the examination, it will also be helpful to purchase and tackle past papers from AQA.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

Good luck!

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