Higher Course Specification

X SQA

Higher Business Management

Course code:	C810 76
Course assessment code:	X810 76
SCQF:	level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2018–19

This document provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

Contents

Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for candidates to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	90	2 hours and 45 minutes
Component 2: assignment	30	8 hours — see 'Course assessment' section

Recommended entry	Progression
Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre. Candidates should have achieved the National 5 Business Management course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.	♦ Advanced Higher Business Management course ♦ other qualifications in business management or related areas ♦ further study, employment and/or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide time for learning, focus on skills and applying learning, and provide scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

Business plays an important role in society, as it creates wealth, prosperity, jobs, and choices for consumers. It is therefore essential to have effective businesses and business managers to sustain this role.

This course helps candidates understand the dynamic, changing and competitive environment of industry and commerce, and the environments that organisations operate in. It develops skills in communicating and presenting business-related information to stakeholders of an organisation.

Purpose and aims

The course highlights the different ways in which large organisations operate. Candidates learn to understand and make use of business information to interpret and report on overall business performance, in a range of contexts. Using current business theory and practice, the course reflects the integrated nature of large organisations, their functions and decision-making processes.

Candidates develop understanding of:

♦ the ways in which society relies on organisations and how external influences can affect them
♦ a range of methods that businesses and other organisations use to meet customer needs
♦ enterprising skills and attributes
♦ how to analyse and interpret business information and communicate it in a clear and concise way

Who is this course for?

The course is suitable for candidates who are interested in entering the world of business, as a manager, employee or self-employed person, and exploring the activities of different types of business.

Course content

The course consists of five areas of study:

Understanding business
Candidates develop their understanding of how large organisations in the private, public and third sectors operate, make decisions and pursue their strategic goals. They analyse the impact that internal and external environments have on an organisation's activity, and consider the implications of these factors.

Management of marketing
Candidates develop their understanding of the importance of effective marketing systems to large organisations. They learn about the relevant theories, concepts and procedures used by organisations to improve competitiveness and customer satisfaction.

Management of operations
Candidates develop their understanding of the importance of effective operations systems to large organisations. They learn about the relevant theories, concepts and procedures used by organisations to improve and/or maintain quality, and the importance of satisfying both internal and external customers' needs.

Management of people
Candidates develop their understanding of the issues that large organisations face when managing people. They learn about the relevant theories, concepts and procedures used by organisations when dealing with staff, including retention, training, leadership and motivation.

Management of finance
Candidates develop their understanding of the issues that large organisations face when managing finance. They learn about the relevant theories, concepts and procedures used by organisations in financial situations.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

♦ applying knowledge and understanding of the impact of business activities on society, in contexts which have complex features

♦ applying the ideas of ethical and effective business decision making to solve strategic business-related problems

♦ communicating relatively complex business ideas and opinions from a range of information relating to the effects of opportunities and constraints on business activity, some of which may be unfamiliar

♦ understanding how entrepreneurial attributes can help business development and risk management

- analysing the effectiveness of a range of marketing activities and understanding how they can be used to enhance customer satisfaction
- analysing a range of activities which can be used during the production process to maximise the quality of goods/services
- understanding leadership styles and how they can be used to enhance the contribution of staff to business success
- analysing business financial data to draw conclusions and suggest solutions where appropriate
- analysing the use of existing and emerging technologies to improve business practice

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment:

Understanding business	
Role of business in society	♦ sectors of industry ♦ sectors of the economy
Types of organisations	♦ public sector organisations ♦ private limited companies ♦ public limited companies ♦ franchising ♦ multinationals ♦ third-sector organisations
Objectives	♦ corporate social responsibility ♦ growth ♦ satisficing ♦ managerial objectives
Methods of growth	♦ organic ♦ horizontal ♦ vertical (forwards and backwards) ♦ lateral ♦ conglomerate ♦ diversification
External factors	♦ impact of PESTEC external factors, including economic and competition policy
Internal factors	♦ corporate culture ♦ availability of finance ♦ staffing ♦ technology
Stakeholders	♦ conflicts of interest and interdependence
Structures	♦ features, benefits and drawbacks of different organisational structures
Decision making	♦ types of decisions ♦ quality decisions ♦ SWOT analysis ♦ role of a manager

Management of marketing	
Customers	♦ market-led versus product-led ♦ consumer behaviour
Market research	♦ market research methods (including justification for use) ♦ sampling
Marketing mix	♦ product ♦ price ♦ place ♦ promotion ♦ people ♦ process ♦ physical evidence
Product	♦ product life cycle (including sales revenue and profitability at each stage) ♦ extension strategies ♦ product portfolio
Price	♦ pricing strategies
Place	♦ channels of distribution ♦ role of wholesaler and retailer ♦ types of retailers
Promotion	♦ into and out of the pipeline ♦ public relations
People	♦ people involved in delivering customer satisfaction ♦ levels of after-sales service
Process	♦ systems in place to ensure satisfactory delivery of the service to the customer
Physical evidence	♦ physical environment used to deliver a service
Technology	♦ role of technology in marketing

Management of operations	
Inventory management	♦ inventory management systems ♦ just-in-time ♦ storage, warehousing ♦ logistics
Methods of production	♦ capital- and labour-intensive production methods
Quality	♦ quality management ♦ quality standards and symbols ♦ benchmarking ♦ quality circles ♦ mystery shopping
Ethical and environmental	♦ fair trade ♦ environmental problems and solutions ♦ ethical issues
Technology	♦ role of technology in operations

Management of people	
Workforce planning	♦ elements of workforce planning (including costs and benefits of recruitment and selection)
Training and development	♦ staff development ♦ training schemes ♦ work-based qualifications ♦ appraisal
Motivation and leadership	♦ theories of motivation ♦ leadership styles
Employee relations	♦ institutions involved ♦ processes
Legislation	♦ impact of current employment legislation
Technology	♦ role of technology in human resources

Management of finance	
Sources of finance	♦ appropriate for larger organisations
Cash budgeting	♦ analysis ♦ cash flow issues and solutions Note: preparation of cash budget not required
Financial Statements	♦ interpretation of Income Statements and Statements of Financial Position Note: preparation of financial statements not required
Ratios	♦ profitability ♦ liquidity ♦ efficiency Note: calculation of ratios not required
Technology	♦ role of technology in finance

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level, and can be found on the SCQF website.

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work and draw from the following main skills areas:

1   Literacy

1.2   Writing

2   Numeracy

2.3   Information handling

4   Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.1   Employability
4.4   Enterprise

5   Thinking skills

5.3   Applying
5.4   Analysing and evaluating

You must build these skills into the course at an appropriate level, where there are suitable opportunities.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

♦ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
♦ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
♦ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

♦ assess the impact of business activities on society in unfamiliar contexts
♦ make decisions by applying business concepts and ideas to resolve business-related issues
♦ research, interpret, analyse and evaluate relatively complex business information to draw valid conclusions and suggest solutions where appropriate
♦ communicate relatively complex business ideas and opinions from a wide range of sources

Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper   90 marks

The question paper gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to:

♦ apply and integrate knowledge and understanding of business concepts from all aspects of the course
♦ use data handling techniques to interpret and analyse business information
♦ draw valid conclusions and suggest resolutions to business-related issues

All questions are mandatory and sample from the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section of this document.

The question paper has a total mark allocation of 90 marks. This is 75% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The question paper has two sections.

Section 1 is worth 30 marks and contains one question. This is a multi-part question, with each part attracting a mark from a range of 1–8 marks. The question is based on stimulus material in the form of a case study and samples course content from any of the five areas of study. In general, it assesses decision making and the application of knowledge and understanding.

The stimulus material is based on a real organisation and can include text, financial information, graphs, diagrams and charts. The question generally relates to the stimulus, although some could be based on topics surrounding the stimulus material.

Section 2 is worth 60 marks and contains four questions worth 15 marks each. These are multi-part questions, with each part attracting a mark from a range of 1–8 marks. This section samples course content from any of the five areas of study. In general, it assesses breadth of knowledge and understanding from across the course.

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA.

Candidates have 2 hours and 45 minutes to complete the question paper.

Specimen question papers for Higher courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: assignment

Assignment   30 marks

The assignment gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to:

♦ select an appropriate business and topic
♦ collect information/evidence relating to the context of the assignment, from a range of sources
♦ apply relevant business concepts and theories to the context of the assignment
♦ analyse and evaluate the business data/information
♦ solve problems by applying relatively complex business ideas and concepts relevant to the context of the assignment
♦ communicate valid, justified conclusions and/or recommendations
♦ produce a business report relating to the context of the assignment

Candidates research and analyse information, and produce a business report using given headings. The report is based on an analysis of the research findings and details appropriate conclusions and/or recommendations.

Candidates choose a topic to research. Teachers and lecturers may wish to encourage candidates to frame their report title as a question, for example:

Is the product portfolio of xxx effective?
Have the product extension strategies used by xxx been successful in maintaining/increasing its market share of yyy (a product)?
Have the quality measures used by xxx maintained/increased customer satisfaction?
An analysis of the extended marketing mix of xxx.

The assignment has a total mark allocation of 30 marks. This is 25% of the overall marks for the course assessment. Marks are awarded for:

♦ introduction	2 marks
♦ research	4 marks
♦ analysis and interpretation	13 marks
♦ conclusions and recommendations	10 marks
♦ structure	1 mark

Setting, conducting and marking the assignment

The assignment is:

♦ set by SQA
♦ conducted in centres under some supervision and control
♦ submitted to SQA for external marking

All marking is quality assured by SQA.

Assessment conditions

Time

The assignment is designed to be completed over a notional period of 8 hours. This includes time for research and producing the final business report. Candidates can complete their research and write-up simultaneously.

Candidates who choose to carry out field research may need more than the notional 8 hours to complete their research.

Assessment should start at an appropriate point, normally once most of the content has been delivered.

Supervision, control and authentication

Candidates must carry out the assignment on an individual basis. Research, data collection and analysis must be completed independently.

Desk research should be carried out in centres — field research can be conducted outwith the classroom setting.

Candidates carry out the assignment under some supervision and control, to ensure that work presented is their own. Teachers and lecturers must put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence and/or research not completed within the classroom setting. For example:

♦ regular checkpoint meetings with candidates
♦ short spot-check interviews with candidates
♦ checklists which record activity/progress

Resources

The assignment is open-book — there are no restrictions on the resources that candidates may have access to when undertaking the assignment.

Candidates do not need to make direct contact with organisations as part of their research. They may find that information on websites and elsewhere is enough for the level of research required.

Reasonable assistance

Candidates must complete the assignment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided by teachers and lecturers at relevant stages in the process, as identified below. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much help. If any candidate requires more than what is thought to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment, or they may have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may include:

♦ clarifying the instructions/requirements of the assignment
♦ advising candidates on a suitable topic to research
♦ advising candidates on which organisation to choose
♦ advising candidates on the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen topic
♦ advising candidates on possible sources of information
♦ advising candidates on how best to structure their business report

Reasonable assistance does not include:

♦ providing candidates with full exemplar assignments
♦ directing candidates to specific text within a source of information
♦ telling candidates what analysis they can draw from a research finding
♦ reading and marking drafts

Evidence to be gathered

Candidates produce a business report including supporting appendices. The appendices should show a list of all the sources of information used, which may include:

♦ website addresses used in research
♦ details of newspaper and/or magazine articles (publication name, date, article title) or books (title, chapter, author)
♦ statistical, graphical or numerical data
♦ interview questions and/or responses
♦ questionnaire/survey questions and/or results
♦ appropriate photos/images
♦ notes taken from a visit or a talk
♦ notes taken from an audio-visual source

Volume

The business report should be no longer than 2,000 words (excluding appendices). If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty will be applied.

There should be no more than four pages of appendices attached to the report.

Grading

Candidates' overall grades are determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

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

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

♦ [Higher Business Management subject page](#)
♦ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
♦ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
♦ [Guide to Assessment](#)
♦ [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)
♦ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
♦ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
♦ [Educational Research Reports](#)
♦ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
♦ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

The SCQF framework, level descriptors and handbook are available on the SCQF website.

Administrative information

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

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