

Assessment story

A Level Business

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Business | H436

For first teaching in 2026

For first assessment in 2028

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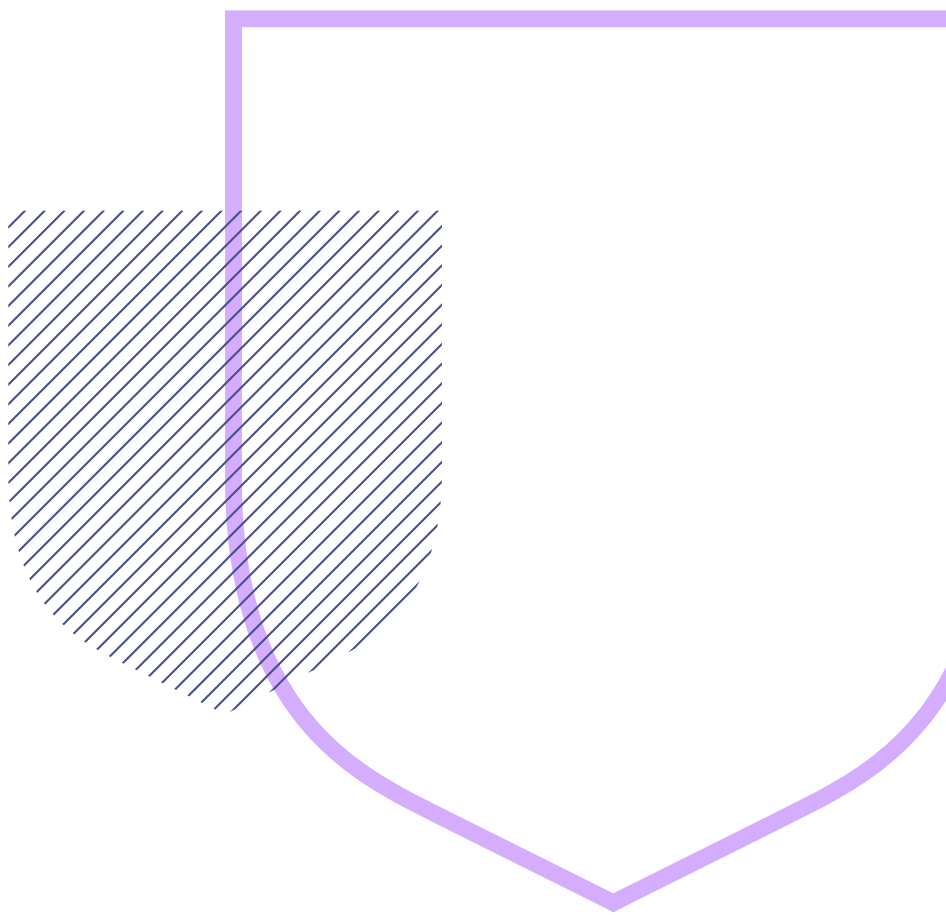
Introduction

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with teachers. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim to encourage students to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

The main purpose of this qualification is to prepare students by providing a suitable foundation for the study of business or related courses in Higher Education. A further purpose of this qualification is to prepare students intending to pursue careers or further study in social sciences, or as part of a general education. In addition, the qualification aims to develop students' interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and inspire them to take an interest in further study and careers within business.

We've created this guide to share with you the story of our assessment approach for this qualification and to give you more information about the content and structure of the assessment for A Level Business.

During the development of this qualification, we talked extensively with teachers and students to influence the structure and content of the qualification and its assessment. The overriding aim was to make the assessment straight forward and to provide teachers and students with the confidence needed to understand the requirements.



Specification design

We present the subject content in four columns. Alongside the main content, there is a 'Points to include (breadth)' column which focuses on the breadth of content, and a fourth guidance column making it clear the depth of learning required. The *Specification Terms and Usage table* explains the key terms used in this guidance. Together, these columns and the terms table clarify expectations for students and teachers by outlining the scope of content and providing specific information about what constitutes a thorough understanding and necessary skills.

For teachers, using all four columns together (along with the terms table in the specification) gives a clear structure for planning lessons. It helps make sure that both the basic and the more detailed aspects of each topic are covered.

For example, in section 3.4 Leadership, the content column identifies the key concepts are the role and different styles of leadership. The 'Points to include' column lists the specific points that must be taught. The guidance column encourages deeper exploration of the importance of leadership to a business, how different leadership styles affect the organisation and its employees and which styles are most appropriate in different situations.

3.4 Leadership			
Content		Points to include (Breadth)	Guidance (Depth) (read with Specification terms and Usage table)
3.4.1	Leadership - The role of leadership - Styles of leadership	□ presenting a vision, uniting a team, communicating culture, modelling core values, creating an inclusive work environment, inspiring and motivating □ autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, paternalistic, transformational	The importance of leadership to a business The impacts of different styles of leadership on a business and its employees The suitability of different styles of leadership

Points to include (breadth) This column explains what students need to study by setting out the range of topics they must cover for each area of content. The introduction to the specification (Section 3: Subject content) informs teachers that for the 'points to include' column, **'Students should know and understand each point including its meaning, features, characteristics etc.'** and this should be the focus for teaching this column.

Guidance (depth) This column provides teachers and students with information about the depth of content that needs to be taught and learnt to meet the requirements of the assessment. It gives more detail about the depth of knowledge, understanding and skills that may be assessed in the exams. In some cases, it also makes clear what students do not need to learn, helping teachers better understand the expected level of depth.

The guidance column encourages depth by specifying the need for students to consider interpretation, impacts, usefulness, importance etc. of a given piece of content fostering critical and comprehensive exploration of concepts. It also requires consideration from a range of stakeholder perspectives and contexts in which topics can be applied, highlighting the dynamic nature of business and encouraging students to consider a wide range of applications to business contexts.

Additionally, the guidance column helps students prepare for assessments by illustrating the types of questions they might encounter by emphasising higher-order thinking skills, though without using the exact terms used in command words.

Overall, the guidance column and the Specification Terms and Usage table help make the specification easier to understand and apply in assessments. They link what is taught in lessons to how it will be used in exams, helping students develop both a strong understanding of key ideas and the ability to apply them in real business situations.

The content is also organised into smaller sections to support teaching and revision. For example, marketing (section 2) is broken down into 7 topic areas (e.g. 2.4 the marketing mix), with each topic area further broken down into 'blocks' (e.g. 2.4.1 'product' and 2.4.2 'price').

Question paper structure

Our GCE A Level in Business consists of three components. Candidates must take all three papers.

The qualification is marked out of a total of 270 marks

The marks, duration and weightings for all three components are the same.

Component	Marks	Duration	Weighting
01: Business activity, marketing and people	90	2 hours	33.3%
02: Operations, finance and external influences	90	2 hours	33.3%
03: Strategy, risk and managing change	90	2 hours	33.3%

Exam overview

Assessment objectives and weightings

	Assessment objective	Cambridge OCR Approach	Weighting
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge of terms, concepts, theories, methods and models to show an understanding of how individuals and organisations are affected by and respond to business issues	The focus of this AO is to assess student's ability to recall and understand business terminology, theories, concepts etc. with questions focussing on either factual recall or providing a clear explanation of a concept. Marks are allocated for accuracy and clarity without the need for contextualisation (excepting where it targets multiple AOs).	23.33%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding to various business contexts to show how individuals and organisations are affected by and respond to issues	The focus of this AO is to assess students' ability to apply relevant knowledge and understanding (AO1) to a specific business context provided. Case studies, which may include data, are included to provide a clear context and questions are designed to test the ability to link concepts to the given context. Marks are awarded for using context in a response rather than generic knowledge.	23.33%
AO3	Analyse issues within business, showing an understanding of the impact on individuals and organisations of external and internal influences	The focus of this AO is to test students' ability to break down issues, explore implications and make connections. Questions will follow an AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO2 (application) element requiring students to explore the causes, impacts or interrelationships in the given context. Marks are allocated for logical structure, clarity and depth of argument, focusing on cause-and-effect reasoning (the impacts of internal and external influences on individuals and organisations). This assessment objective is never targeted in isolation, and all 8- and 14-mark items include elements of AO3.	26.66%
AO4	Evaluate quantitative and qualitative information to make informed judgements and propose evidence-based solutions to business issues	The focus of this AO is to assess the students' ability to propose evidence-based solutions, make reasoned judgements and justify conclusions on quantitative and qualitative information. They will require students to weigh up arguments, consider the context and/or assess short- and long-term implications. Marks are allocated for 'balanced' arguments, use of evidence and justified recommendations/proposals of evidence-based solutions or conclusions. AO4 will only be assessed in combination with the other three assessment objectives. So, for 14-mark questions in sections B and C of each component, a progressive structure is used across the Assessment Objectives. For example, students might define or identify key concepts (AO1), apply the knowledge to the business case provided (AO2), explore the implications, relationships or impact in depth (AO3) and conclude with a justified judgement or proposing an evidence-based solution (AO4).	26.66%

By component and section

Awarding of marks is consistent across all three components and represented as follows:

	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4
Component 1	21	21	24	24
Component 2	21	21	24	24
Component 3	21	21	24	24
Total	63	63	72	72

Component details:

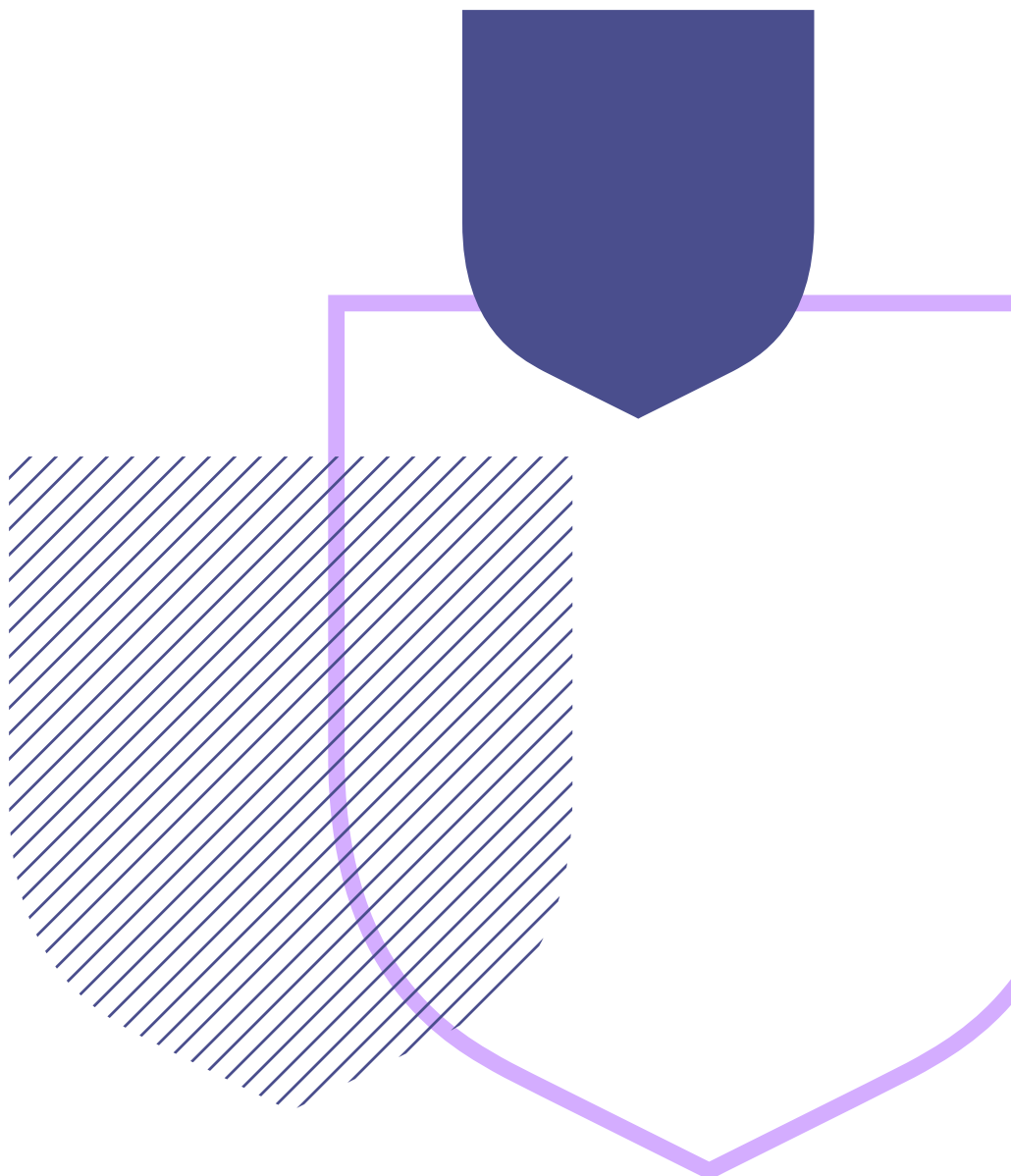
All three components in A Level Business follow a similar pattern, allowing for a straight forward and consistent approach to assessment.

	Component Title	Weighting	Mark	Time	AOs	Content overview including question types
01	Business activity, marketing and people	33.33%	90/270	2 hours	AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4	Section A: 10 MCQs from across Component 01 content all 1 mark. Section B: 1x 4⁽¹⁾ marks, 1x 8 marks, 2 x 14 marks Section C: 1x 4⁽¹⁾ marks, 1x 8 marks, 2 x 14 marks
02	Operations, finance and external influences	33.33%	90/270	2 hours	AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4	Section A: 10 MCQs from across Component 02 content all 1 mark. Section B: 1x 4⁽¹⁾ marks, 1x 8 marks, 2 x 14 marks Section C: 1x 4⁽¹⁾ marks, 1x 8 marks, 2 x 14 marks
03	Strategy, risk, and managing change	33.33%	90/270	2 hours	AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4	Section A: 10 MCQs from across Component 03 content all 1 mark. Section B: 1x 4⁽¹⁾ marks, 1x 8 marks, 2 x 14 marks Section C: 1x 4⁽¹⁾ marks, 1x 8 marks, 2 x 14 marks
Total		100%	270	6 hours		

⁽¹⁾ 4 mark questions may be either 1 x 4 mark, 2 x 2 mark or 1 x 1 mark + 1 x 3 marks

Use of scenarios

Sections B and C of each question paper will be framed by a case study. To ensure we have the required range of contexts we need in any given exam series, we will use a mix of real and fictitious business depending on the focus of the assessment. Students will be required to read the whole of the case study to support their responses to the questions that follow. All questions in each section will be linked to the case study provided. Case studies will contain both textual information and graphs or visualise information as appropriate.



Command words

Key command word	Mark Tariff	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Business usage
Identify ^c	1	100%				Recognise or select a specific piece of information.
State	1-2	100%				Provide a concise answer, often in one or two sentences, without the need for a detailed explanation. For example, SAM Component 03, question 15b.
Explain (no context)	2-4	100%				Clarify a concept or process by providing more detailed/greater depth of understanding. For example, SAM Component 01, question 15a.
Explain (context)	2-4	50%	50%			Clarify a concept or process by providing more detailed/greater depth of understanding and applying the response to the context given. For example, SAM Component 03, question 11.
Calculate	1-4		100%			Perform a mathematical operation to determine a specific value or result. For example, SAM Component 02, questions 15b.
Complete ^c	1-4		100%			Use the context to fill in missing information, such as gaps in a table, diagram or graph.
Analyse	8	25%	25%	50%		Break down information into parts, examining relationships, causes or implications. For example, SAM Component 03, question 12.
Analyse /Recommend / Justify (in combination) without instruction to use the case study	14	14%	14%	29%	43%	Examine details critically to propose a solution to business issues. For example, SAM Component 02, question 13.
Analyse /Recommend / Justify (in combination) with instruction to use the case study	14	14%	14%	29%	43%	Examine details critically to make an informed judgement on business issues. For example, SAM Component 01, question 13.
Evaluate with suggest	14	14%	14%	29%	43%	Assess the factors affecting an idea, decision or situation, concluding with a justified judgement and proposed solution. For example, SAM Component 02, question 18.

^c *Identify and Complete are not terms used in the sample assessment material but future live assessments, may use them, for example in completing cash flow forecasts or identifying a financial method of motivation.*

We will not restrict command words for the MCQs in Section A due to the nature of these types of questions.

Exploring our question types

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

There will be 10 multiple choice questions within Section A of each Component (11% of total marks across all components). These will each be worth a single mark. These multiple choice questions will focus on the assessment of AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO2 (the application of that knowledge and understanding). MCQs will also be used to target quantitative skills. The MCQs will all have answer options A-D. Students will need to place a tick in the box for their chosen answer. If they make a choice and wish to correct it they should clearly cross it through and tick the box they wish to submit as their final answer.

The focus of these questions is either knowledge and understanding e.g.

1 A PEST analysis:

- (a)** concentrates on internal factors that a business needs to improve
- (b)** considers the degree of risk associated with a proposed strategy
- (c)** identifies the power of a business's suppliers and buyers
- (d)** investigates factors in a business's external environment

☐☐☐☐

[1]

Or on application:

Which is an example of an IT retailer breaking consumer protection legislation?

- (a)** Charging higher prices for its tablets than all other retailers in the area
- (b)** Choosing not to stock printers and scanners made outside of Europe
- (c)** Knowingly selling a laptop with a slow processor as a hi-spec machine
- (d)** Refusing to give a refund on a faulty hard drive without proof of purchase

☐☐☐☐

[1]

In either case, this will be made clear by the question, which will have context if it focuses on AO2 and students should be mindful of the context when selecting their chosen response.

4 mark questions

Any question with a mark less than 8 will be 'points based marking'. This means that the examiner will be looking for a corresponding number of 'points' in a response, with each one gaining a mark.

In each component, question 11 and question 15 will be 4 mark questions – however the make up of these questions will vary year on year depending on the knowledge and skills being tested. The 4 mark questions will either be a single 4 mark question, or 2 question totalling 4 marks (2x2 mark questions or 1x1 mark plus 1 x 3 mark questions). The overall assessment objective weighting will be the same.

Example of 1 mark question:

In Component 2 question 15a, it asks:

State what is meant by the term 'profit'.

This is a 1-mark question, with students being awarded for any relevant definition of the term profit, e.g. money leftover once expenses have been paid. 1 mark questions will typically focus on AO1 (knowledge and understanding).

Example of a two mark question

In Component 2 question 11a, it asks:

Explain one way of managing operational quality in a business.

This is an AO1 question, as it's an explain without context question. To gain both marks, students need to mark a valid identification of a way of managing operational quality, plus one further mark for explaining that way. E.g.

Quality control (1) can be used. This involves the inspection of inputs and outputs against predetermined standards (1).

The mark scheme also makes clear, in these types of question, that answers do not need to relate to the case study.

Questions can also target both AO1 and AO2 in these 2 mark questions. For example, in component 2 question 11b it asks:

Explain one likely reason why Merlin Entertainments focuses on providing a high quality of experience to its guests.

This is still an explain question, but context is provided, so one mark is awarded for relevant knowledge and understanding (AO1) and 1 mark is awarded for application to the context (AO2). The reason given must show understanding and cannot simply be recall of something learnt during the course of the study. The mark scheme provides an example response for this:

- *Focusing on quality is likely to lead to high levels of customer satisfaction (1 x AO1 mark), leading to visitors recommending the theme park to family and friends (1 x AO2 mark).*

The first mark (AO1 mark) shows understanding that quality = customer satisfaction and the second mark (AO2 mark) applies it the context of Merlin Entertainment.

Example of a three mark question:

In Component 2 question 11b, it asks:

Calculate the minimum number of items of clothing Ryugo Ltd needs to sell this year to avoid making a loss. Show your working.

This question focuses entirely on AO2 (application) and marks are rewarded as follows:

Fixed cost = $12 \times \text{£}350,000 = \text{£}4,200,000$ (1)

Contribution = $\text{£}60 - \text{£}12 = \text{£}48$ (1)

Break-even = $\frac{\text{£}4,200,000}{\text{£}48} = 87,500$ items (of clothing) (1)

Note: this question targets quantitative skills. This is indicated in the mark scheme with a 'Q'. All three marks are given for the correct answer, with or without working.

Example of a four mark question:

Our mark schemes give an indication of the type of response examiners are likely to expect. For example, component 3, question 11 is a 4 mark question, focusing on both AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO2 (application) with two marks available for each. The question is:

Explain how two of Porter's 5 forces apply to CCEP.

- In this question, students will gain a mark by showing knowledge of one of Porter's 5 forces, and then a further mark by applying it to the context. E.g. Competitive rivalry (1xAO1 mark) will be high because other brands will be trying to gain some of CCEP's 51.8% market share (1xAO2 mark).

8 mark questions

These questions focus on AO1 (2 marks), AO2 (2 marks) and AO3 (4 marks). These questions typically provide opportunities for candidates to explore how a particular concept, strategy, policy, or set of characteristics can create both advantages and disadvantages for an organisation or its stakeholders. Students may be asked to consider how the concept may positively and/or negatively affect the organisation, using qualitative and/or quantitative information provided in the case study.

Analysis should investigate how the identified business concept, strategy, policy, or characteristics affect the organisation's operations, behaviour, or performance. Basic analysis shows an understanding of the impact on the organisation using straightforward logic and relevant business concepts. Developed analysis uses more detailed and logical chains of reasoning to explain the implications for the organisation of applying or demonstrating the business concept, strategy, policy, or characteristics. Quantitative and/or qualitative evidence may be used to support analysis.

Example of an eight-mark question:**In component 01 question 12, it asks:**

Analyse two measures Morrisons could use to assess the performance of its shopworkers.

This question lets students show they understand why businesses measure how well staff are doing, and how Morrisons could do this using the case study information.

In your answer, you should explain what the chosen performance measures would mean for Morrisons. You should include both the advantages (how the measures could help fix problems) and the disadvantages (what the measures might miss or cause). A basic answer uses simple business ideas and clear cause-and-effect. A stronger answer links ideas together in a more detailed chain of reasoning and explains the wider impact on the business.

14 mark questions

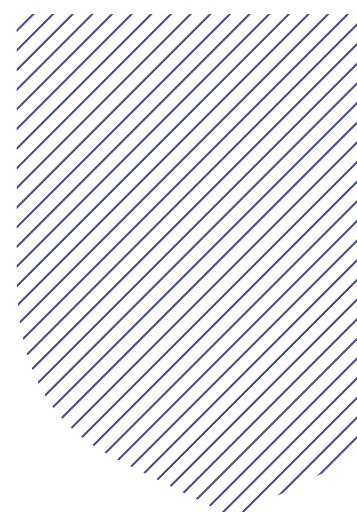
There are two types of 14 mark questions within our A Level, those focusing on analysis and recommendations, and those on evaluation and suggestions. They focus on AO1 (2 marks), AO2 (2 marks), AO3 (4 marks) and AO4 (6 marks).

Analyse and recommend questions.

This question requires candidates to make informed judgements or propose a solution (depending on whether the question includes the instruction to use the case study) using relevant information. In particular, it assesses candidates' decision-making skills and their ability to make informed judgements about the issue or strategy under consideration. It provides opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of relevant business concepts and apply this understanding to the information provided in the case study.

Analysis should investigate how the business and/or stakeholders are affected by the specific approaches, strategies, or methods discussed and consider the benefits and limitations for the organisation of adopting these approaches. Basic analysis should demonstrate an understanding of the impacts of specific methods or decisions using straightforward logic and reference to basic business concepts. Developed analysis should demonstrate more complex reasoning, using a logical chain of argument to explore the implications for the organisation.

Evaluation requires candidates to reach a decision supported by justification as to which option, strategy, or approach is most effective or appropriate for the organisation. A basic evaluative assertion would comprise a decision with some reasoning, but without detailed justification or supporting evidence. A justified evaluative comment would include a clear rationale for the decision, supported by qualitative and/or quantitative evidence that weighs up effectiveness, suitability, or impact. Justified evaluation may include critique that challenges assumptions, theories, or models, or considers alternative perspectives and trade-offs, such as cost-benefit considerations. This may include comparison with other options not explicitly referred to in the case study. Strong evaluation will weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of different options in order to prioritise or rank them.



Component 2 question 17:

Using the case study, analyse the two external sources of finance that Ryan and Hugo are considering using to fund the purchase of the inventory control software. Recommend which of the two sources of finance is most suitable for Ryugo Ltd. Justify your answer.

This question tests how well students can use both written information (qualitative) and numbers (quantitative) to make a sensible judgement about finance options.

Students need to show they understand bank loans and crowdfunding, and apply this to Ryugo Ltd using the case study details (including any figures about costs and rewards).

For analysis, typically students would explain the pros and cons for Ryugo Ltd of each option (loan vs crowdfunding). A basic answer uses simple cause-and-effect and basic finance ideas. A stronger answer links points together in a clear chain of reasoning and explains the wider consequences for the business.

For evaluation, students should choose one option and explain clearly why it is the better choice for Ryugo Ltd. A basic evaluation is a choice with a little reasoning. A strong evaluation weighs up both options using evidence from the case (numbers and written details) and considers key issues such as Ryugo being low geared, not yet making a profit, and not yet giving the founders a return. It should also consider short-term vs long-term trade-offs, then reach a final, justified recommendation.

Evaluate and suggest questions.

This question requires candidates to use informed judgements based on relevant information in order to propose an evidence-based solution. In particular, it assesses candidates' ability to analyse the impacts of a chosen strategy or approach and to use their decision-making skills to propose a suitable alternative where appropriate. The question requires a holistic consideration of the dynamic market in which the organisation operates in order to assess the relative strengths and limitations of the current approach and the potential benefits of alternative strategies.

The question provides opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of relevant business concepts, strategies, or models and to apply this understanding to the information provided in the case study. Breadth of knowledge refers to the range of relevant business concepts, theories, and terminology used in a response. Strong answers will draw on ideas from multiple topic areas and demonstrate an understanding of different approaches or perspectives. Limited knowledge may be shown through reliance on a single concept or a narrow part of the specification.

Breadth of application refers to how effectively knowledge is applied across the full business context. Strong responses will apply concepts to different aspects of the scenario — such as various stakeholders, business functions, or external influences — and use contextual details to support reasoning. Narrow application may focus on only one aspect of the organisation or overlook significant features of the case study.

Analysis should investigate how the organisation is affected by its adoption of the identified strategy or approach. Basic analysis should demonstrate an understanding of the advantages and/or disadvantages for the organisation using straightforward logic and reference to basic business concepts.

Developed analysis should demonstrate more complex reasoning, using a logical chain of argument to explore the implications for the organisation, either historically, in the present, or in the future.

Evaluation requires candidates to make judgements about the effectiveness or appropriateness of the current strategy and, where relevant, to propose an alternative strategy or solution. A basic proposal may lack clear reasoning or supporting evidence. A solution with justified evaluative comment will include a clear rationale supported by logical reasoning. An evidence-based solution with justification is likely to be supported by qualitative and/or quantitative contextual evidence. Strong evaluation will use balanced qualitative and quantitative reasoning to justify why a particular strategy or alternative is the most appropriate or beneficial for the organisation.

Component 3, question 14:

Using the data in Fig. 2 and any other relevant information, evaluate CCEP's progress towards its DEI commitments and suggest ways it could further improve this progress.

This question tests how well students can use both written information and data to make a clear judgement and suggest practical, evidence-based improvements.

Students need to show they understand diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and can interpret the figures in the case study (quantitative skills) as well as use written/context information (qualitative).

Breadth of knowledge means using a range of relevant business ideas and terms (not just one). Strong answers often link DEI to different areas such as leadership, HR, culture, recruitment, training and performance.

For analysis, students should explain what the data and information show about CCEP's progress (or lack of progress) towards its DEI targets. A basic answer uses simple cause-and-effect and general business reasoning. A stronger answer uses the numbers to support a clearer chain of reasoning about what is improving, what is not, and why that matters.

For evaluation and suggestions, students should make an overall judgement about how well CCEP is meeting its DEI targets, then suggest ways to improve further. Strong answers use evidence from the case study (figures and context) to justify both the judgement and the solutions. Possible solutions could include: setting clearer targets (e.g., aiming for 50/50 gender balance), publishing more complete DEI data (e.g., ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background as well as gender), improving skills development through targeted training with local providers, and using external audits to check progress and keep the business accountable.

Quantitative skills

Students are permitted to use a scientific or graphical calculator for this qualification. Calculators are subject to the rules in the document “Instructions for Conducting Examinations” published annually by JCQ (www.jcq.co.uk).

Students are able to use formula booklets for this qualification. The use of the H436 Formula Booklet enables students to focus on the application of skills to a given context and better demonstrate the acquired competence in the quantitative skills that are relevant in a business A level. The formula provided will be for specific business elements. It will not include basic level 2 mathematical skills which students would still be required to have learnt, such as calculating percentage change (any size increase and decrease), and original value after percentage change. It will include relevant formulae for the qualification and will not be specific to any given exam series. The formula booklet will contain formulae from across the qualification and students will be given a clean printed copy in each exam.

A formula booklet in A Level Business is a practical and supportive tool that enhances learning and does not compromise the level of academic demand. It fosters a focus on understanding and applying business concepts, and mirrors real-world practices. It allows for business analysis rather than just memorising formulae. This is essential in A Level Business to support skills of critical thinking and problem-solving. Knowing how to apply formulae to real-world situations is far more valuable than rote learning, which can often be quickly forgotten.

The specification (Section 3.1 Quantitative Skills in Business) makes it clear that *‘The formulae provided will be for selected business elements only. Formulae will not include basic level 2 mathematical skills’*. For example, Section 1.4.1 of the specification subject content outlines the required measures of business size that students must be able to calculate: revenue, output, number of outlets, number of employees, market share, number of customers, market capitalisation, capital employed, and area/space. Of these, formulae are included in the formulae booklet only for revenue, market share, market capitalisation, and capital employed. However, students are still expected to calculate output, number of outlets, number of employees, number of customers, and area/space without being given specific formulae. Equally, in section 7.6.4 – critical path analysis and section 7.4.1 – investment decisions – no formula is provided.

Quantitative marks in longer mark questions are not awarded for simple substitution; but rather the use of the formulae to arrive at an accurate response and to support further explanation, analysis or evaluation. For example, in Component 2, question 15b, whilst the formulae booklet has a formula for break-even, the question does not reference break-even or contribution, and the student must therefore use their business knowledge to identify the appropriate formula to use. The quantitative mark therefore is only then awarded for a combination of applying that knowledge to identify the appropriate formula and using mathematical skills to apply it accurately to the question.

In our mark schemes, quantitative marks are assigned the letter ‘Q’ so you can clearly see how marks are being awarded. For example, in Component 2, question 14 “Using calculations of two different liquidity ratios, evaluate Merlin Entertainments’ liquidity position and suggest ways to improve this position.”

The mark scheme highlights the marks that will be awarded for students showing quantitative skills in their responses as follows:

	Knowledge and Understanding (2 marks)	Application (2 marks)	Analysis (4 marks)	Evaluation (6 marks)
Strong	2 marks Breadth of knowledge relating to liquidity. [KU]	2 marks (Q) Correct calculation of both liquidity ratios. (working not required) [APP]	4 marks (Q) Developed (quantitative) analysis of both of the liquidity ratios. [DEV]	5-6 marks (Q)(Q) A justified evaluation with evidence-based solution is proposed which is well-developed with a sustained line of reasoning that is clear, coherent and logically structured. The evaluation presents information that is relevant and substantiated (including explicit use of the context and evaluative use of the ratio data) that weighs up how Merlin Entertainments' can improve its liquidity position. [EE][EE]
Good			3 marks Developed (quantitative) (Q) analysis of one of the liquidity ratios AND a basic analysis of factors relating to one liquidity ratio. [DEV] [AN]	4 marks A justified evaluation with evidence-based solution is proposed which has a line of reasoning which is reasonably coherent and that has some structure. The evaluation presents information that is mostly relevant and supported by some evidence (including explicit use of the context but with no evaluative use of the ratio data) that weighs up how Merlin Entertainments' can improve its liquidity position. [EE]

	Knowledge and Understanding (2 marks)	Application (2 marks)	Analysis (4 marks)	Evaluation (6 marks)
Reasonable	1 mark Limited knowledge relating to liquidity. [KU]	1 mark (Q) Correct calculation of one liquidity ratio. (working not required) [APP]	2 marks Developed (quantitative) (Q) analysis of one of the liquidity ratios. OR Basic analysis of factors relating to two liquidity ratios. [AN]	2-3 marks A justified evaluative comment with a solution w is proposed but with limited structure. The information presented has some relevance for improving the liquidity position of a business. [EVAL] [EVAL]
Limited			1 mark Basic analysis of factors relating to one liquidity ratio. [AN]	1 mark An assertion for a solution is proposed. The reasoning for the proposal lacks structure and the information presented has little relevance for improving the liquidity position of a business. [EVAL]

NOTE: the grid contains 7 'Q's though only 6 can be awarded. The additional Q is related to where in the analysis mark the response lies.

Synopticity

What does “synoptic” mean in A Level Business?

Synoptic questions are designed to test how well a student can use everything they have learned across the whole course, not just one topic. In our A Level Business, this happens in the final question of Component 3 (for example, Question 18 in the SAMs).

In this question, students are expected to bring together knowledge and understanding from different parts of the course. This could include areas like marketing, finance, operations, people, and strategy. They should use examples from across their studies to support their answer.

To make this clear, the exam question will include the instruction:

“Use your knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study when answering this question.”

This tells you that the question is synoptic.

How the question is marked

The mark scheme says that any relevant knowledge from the whole course can be used to support the points being made. The examples listed in the mark scheme are not the only correct answers – they are just there to guide examiners. As long as the answer is reasonable and well-explained, it can be credited. This is shown in the mark schemes as ARA (Any Reasonable Answer).

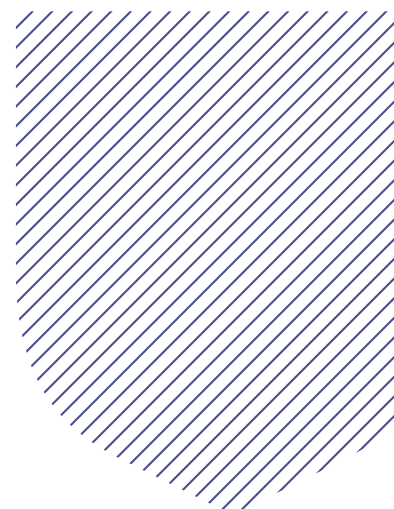
Component 3 is particularly suitable for synoptic questions because it focuses on big business decisions, such as strategy. When answering these questions, students might link together ideas from marketing, finance, people, and other areas to explain how a business decision could work in real life.

What skills are being tested?

Synoptic questions assess all four Assessment Objectives (AOs). This means students need to:

- Apply knowledge to the business scenario
- Analyse the key issues and explain how different business areas affect each other
- Evaluate different options by weighing up advantages, disadvantages, risks, and consequences
- Reach a justified conclusion and propose a solution based on evidence

Rather than treating topics separately, students need to show that they understand how different parts of a business link together.



Features of strong responses

To reach the higher mark bands, the answer must:

- Use knowledge from more than one component
- Apply it clearly to the scenario
- Show balanced analysis and evaluation
- Consider different viewpoints and business impacts
- Make well-reasoned and justified evidence-based solutions.

In the marking grid, higher mark bands are shown with a '#' symbol and include the phrase "drawn from across the full course of study."

If the students answer does not bring together knowledge from different areas of the course, it cannot score more than 8 marks, even if parts of it are good.

Component 3, Question 18:

Evaluate factors likely to affect The Thirl's future success and suggest how the business should respond to these factors to achieve success.

Use your knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study when answering this question.

This question follows the same pattern as outlined in the 'Evaluate and Suggest' type questions and all the same conditions apply. The key difference is that within the mark scheme, those students showing knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study are rewarded in the top mark bands.

As highlighted in the mark scheme, *"All points can be supported with any appropriate knowledge and understanding that a student may have learned whilst studying the course. The full course of study refers to relevant information taken from more than one component and students can only be rewarded 'strong' responses if they meet this criteria."*

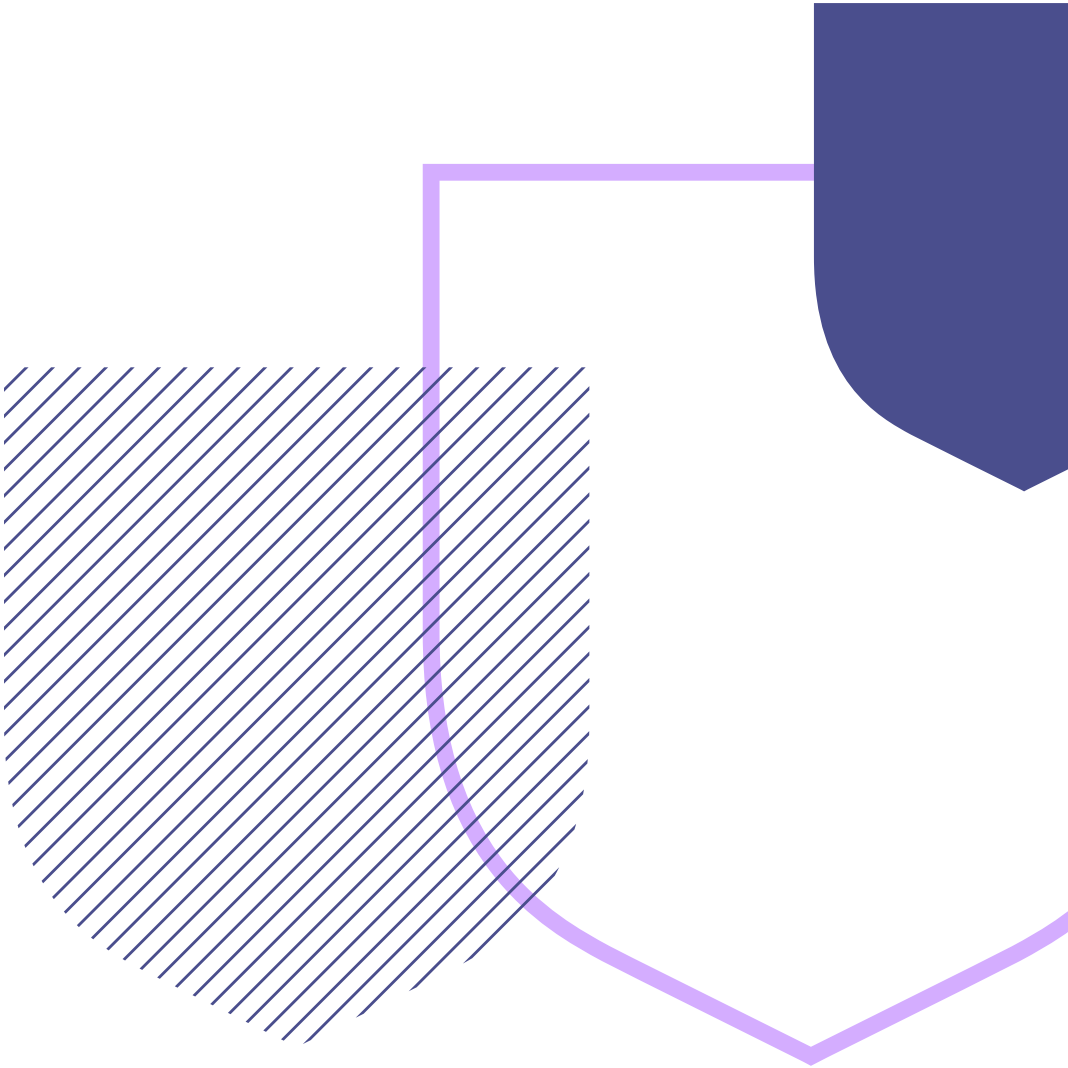
Students should be encouraged to use whatever relevant information they feel is suitable for the given scenario that directly responds to the question. The key is that this should be *from more than one* component. Given the overall focus of Component 3, when discussing issues such as strategy, risk and managing change, it is likely that students will naturally discuss functional areas of business, such as finance, marketing or people, or indeed external influences, when responding to this question.

Whilst it worth highlighting that the final question in Component 3 is the only 'formal' synoptic question, due to the holistic nature of business, students are free (but not required) to draw upon any relevant knowledge for any question, in any component.

Summary of updates

This table outlines updates made in various versions of this resource. For the latest version of our resources, please visit [Teach Cambridge](#).

Section	Change	Version	Date
All	Original content	1.0	July 2026



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