A Level Business

Exam Technique & Guidance

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Paper structure

Assessments

Paper 1: Business 1	Paper 2: Business 2	Paper 3: Business 3
What's assessed	**What's assessed**	**What's assessed**
All content above	All content above	All content above
Assessed	**Assessed**	**Assessed**
• written exam: 2 hours • 100 marks in total • 33.3% of A-level	• written exam: 2 hours • 100 marks in total • 33.3% of A-level	• written exam: 2 hours • 100 marks in total • 33.3% of A-level
Questions	**Questions**	**Questions**
Three compulsory sections: • Section A has 15 multiple choice questions (MCQs) worth 15 marks. • Section B has short answer questions worth 35 marks. • Sections C and D have two essay questions (choice of one from two and one from two) worth 25 marks each.	Three data response compulsory questions worth approximately 33 marks each and made up of three or four part questions.	One compulsory case study followed by approximately six questions.

Before the qualification can be awarded, students must undertake **all** the assessments.

Descriptions of Annotations

Annotation	Description
?	Unsure/unclear/somewhat confusing
AN	Analysis
APP	Application
BOD	Benefit of the doubt
Cross	Incorrect
EVAL	Evaluation
IR	Irrelevant
KU	Knowledge and understanding
NAQ	Not answering question
On Page Comment	Text box
REP_BIG	Repetition
SEEN	Seen
Tick	Correct
Enhanced Off Page Comment	May be used to make a comment

Top Tips for success

1) **Time management.** You must stick to the rule of a 1.2 per mark. Spending too long on the on questions results in less time to do others which often results in students failing to read questions and/or not finishing the paper.
2) **Read each question carefully and ensure you answer the question you are asked**. Often using the key words in the question at the start of each paragraph can help ensure your answer is focused throughout
3) **Make sure that you apply your knowledge to the business you are writing about.** Good application can be achieved by being completely in context, manipulating data as well as combining data. Being in context means that your answer relates to the business in the case study as well as the problems or issues that the business is specifically facing.
4) **Analysis.** To achieve GOOD analysis, you must provide a **coherent and logical multi-stage argument** that is focused on the question.
5) When it comes to analysis, think **HOW and WHY.** For example, if you say that increased labour productivity will reduce labour costs per unit, **explain HOW and WHY** this is important to the business you are writing about. Put your answer in CONTEXT.
6) Evaluation. To achieve GOOD evaluation, you must provide a **clear and well supported judgment** in relation to the question being asked which is **built on prior analysis and evidence**. A useful strategy is to explain what the most significant point or argument was that led you to that judgement. Why did you choose one argument over another? Why did you reject one?
7) Efficient use of the **case study** is crucial. Underlining everything often results in key points being missed. Highlight the key points you want to use to put your answer in context.
8) Definitions. If there are two key words in the question **you only need to define ONE.** Defining both wastes time. Definitions only contribute to your knowledge marks. Define one key term well and then move on.
9) **Calculations.** Work quickly and accurately and keep to the time limit. If (for a 6-mark question) after 6 minutes you are still struggling then move on. It is unlikely that further time will result in a significant increase in your mark for that question and you run the risk of rushing the last question. ALWAY, repeat, ALWAYS show your workings when doing calculations.
10) **Read the examiners reports and mark schemes** for past papers. They are free and are designed to help you improve

MCQs advice

- With MCQ type tests, usually **time** is very limited. You have 1.2 minutes for each MCQ, so divide the time on all MCQs properly. This does not mean divide time equally. For example, Maths MCQs may take more time to solve while English MCQs should take lot less than the time allocated.

- **Read** the MCQ and before reading the choices, think in your mind for correct answer and then read the choices. It will help you to choose the correct choice or the answer.

- There will be some choices that would surely know are wrong, skip these wrong choices first and focus on the rest choices for correct answer. It increases your chances to select the correct choice.

- For answering MCQs you are directed to record your answers in a specific way. Ensure you follow the directions or your work with become void.

- Practice sample MCQs tests in timed environment. These let you know how you perform under time pressure.

- Watch out all students taking AQA A Level Business in June 2018. A new MCQ question format has appeared on Paper 1 which looks like it might become an examiner favourite.

  Question: Which of the following statements is true?

- ✓ Select the correct response and ensure the circle is completely filled in alongside the appropriate answer
- ✓ If you change your mind, cross out the original answer and completely fill in the circle next to the answer you now wish to choose
- ✓ If you do change your mind, refer back to the instructions at the start of Section A to ensure you are following them precisely; the key is to make sure your answer is clear

Key Study Notes:

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L3	Provide a well explained benefit of budgeting using knowledge and understanding applied to the context.	4
L2	Provide a reasonable explanation of a benefit of budgeting using knowledge and understanding with some application to context.	2-3
L1	Demonstrate some knowledge and understanding but the explanation of the benefit is limited and lacks application to context.	1

Explain one way in which a reduction in interest rates might affect a large house building firm. [4m]

One way that a reduction in interest rates might affect a large house building firm is by increasing the **demand for new-build houses**. Demand for new houses from potential homeowners is affected by several factors, two important ones of which are the **price of the house** and the **finance cost of taking out a mortgage** to buy the house. A reduction in interest rates by the Monetary Policy Commission may in turn lead to a fall in the interest rate charged by building societies and banks on mortgages. This should then **make a mortgage more affordable for home buyers** by reducing the interest element of the monthly mortgage payment, thereby enabling home buyers to afford a larger mortgage or be able to take one out in the first place
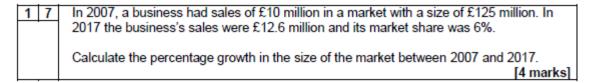
- Knowledge
- Analysis
- Application

*Although there is no context in paper 1 and therefore for 4m, students must still apply to meet a level 3 criteria. To do this they must answer the question in context of the industry/business being discussed. In this case "**large house building firms".** In the model response the student have **discussed mortgages and home buyers, this is sufficient Ap for a 4m as their response is applied specifically to the housing market.**

How to structure a 4/5-mark question – Calculation Questions

The assessment of quantitative skills will include at least level 2 mathematical skills as a minimum of 10% of the overall AS marks and as a minimum of 10% of the overall A-level marks.

Marks will be allocated in accordance to the formula and method demonstrated. It is vital that all quantitative skills responses evidence the processed used, student must ensure that formula is implemented and show in their "workings". If answers are wrong marks can still be allocated accordingly to the correct method. It is imperative that "units" and "measurements" are included in your answer, for example %, cost per unit, days, etc. This aspect of your answer is usually worth 1mark therefore must be include in order to gain maximum marks.

1	7	In 2007, a business had sales of £10 million in a market with a size of £125 million. In 2017 the business's sales were £12.6 million and its market share was 6%.
		Calculate the percentage growth in the size of the market between 2007 and 2017.
		[4 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 1 and AO2 = 3

Answer = 68% (4 marks)

Market size in 2017 = £12.6m / 0.06 =   £210m   or £210 million (2 marks)
                      (1 mark)   (1 mark)

Market growth = EITHER
(210 - 125) / 125 x 100 = 85/125 x 100 = <u>68%</u>
                      (1 mark)   (1 mark)
OR   210/125 = 1.68. Therefore growth = 1.68 - 1.00 = 68%
            (1 mark)   (1 mark)

IF no valid calculation, one mark for formula:

$$Market\ growth\ (\%) = \frac{size\ of\ market\ in\ 2017 - size\ of\ market\ in\ 2007}{size\ of\ market\ in\ 2007} \times 100$$

Credit other relevant approaches.
Markers note: no credit for calculating original market share

How to structure a 9-mark question

Level	The student will typically demonstrate:	Marks
3	**A good response overall that focuses on many of the demands of the question** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is well developed and is applied effectively to the context.	7–9
2	**A reasonable response overall that focuses on some of the demands of the question** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited knowledge and understanding of a range of issues in the question or a good knowledge and understanding of relatively few issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is developed and is applied to the context.	4–6
1	**A limited response overall with little focus on the demands of the question** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited range and depth of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis with little development and with mainly descriptive application to the context.	1–3

9m-[L3]

- A good response that focuses on many of the demands of the question
- Demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question
- Demonstrates analysis which is well developed
- Applied effectively to the context

Top tip for analysis

BLT Connectives
Students really grasp analysis once they recognize that good analysis involves discussing the impact of their points in a 'chain', using at least three connectives. To encourage students to remember to use three, get them to think 'BLT' (Because, leading to and therefore). This works well when broken down into a 'BLT' grid, which makes a good class activity.

Essay Planning Guide – 9m

	Point 1	Point 2
Make your point. • Use the wording in the question to convey your answer • Be clear and concise		
Analyse • Use connectives • Explain - why, how, impact and consequence • Refer to the "hooks" in the question to support your argument • What is it specifically about your point that helps answer the question? • Make sure there is a high degree of accuracy • Ensure your argument is logical • Don't make assumptions • Ensure you have explained how and why		
Evidence • Use the data provided • have you interpreted the data? What is it telling you? • what have you calculated? • Use of models/theorists • Use of wider reading		

How to structure a 12-mark question

Level	The student will typically demonstrate:	Marks
3	**A good response overall that focuses on many of the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is well developed, applied effectively to the context and considers a range of issues in the question	9 – 12 marks
2	**A reasonable response overall that focuses on some of the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited knowledge and understanding of a range of issues in the question or a good knowledge and understanding of relatively few issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is developed, applied to the context and considers some of the issues in the question	5 – 8 marks
1	**A limited response overall with little focus on the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited range and depth of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis with little development and mainly descriptive application to the context	1-4 marks

12m-[L3]

- A good response that focuses on many of the demands of the question
- Demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question
- Demonstrates analysis which is well developed
- Applied effectively to the context

How to structure a 16-mark question

Level	The student will typically demonstrate:	Marks
4	**An excellent response overall that is fully focused on the key demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding that is precise and well selected in relation to issues in the question • demonstrates analysis throughout which is well developed, is applied effectively to the context and considers a balanced range of the issues in the question • makes judgements or provides solutions which are built effectively on analysis, show balance and have a clear focus on the question as a whole throughout.	13-16 marks
3	**A good response overall that focuses on many of the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is well developed, applied effectively to the context and considers a range of issues in the question • makes judgements or provides solutions which are built on analysis, show balance and address the question as a whole.	9-12 marks
2	**A reasonable response overall that focuses on some of the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited knowledge and understanding of a range of issues in the question or a good knowledge and understanding of relatively few issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is developed, applied to the context and considers some of the issues in the question • makes judgements or provides solutions which are built on analysis, but lack balance and are not fully focused on the question as a whole.	5-8 marks
1	**A limited response overall with little focus on the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited range and depth of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis with little development, mainly descriptive application to the context and considers a limited number of issues in the question • makes judgements or proposes solutions which have limited links to analysis or limited focus on the question as a whole.	1-4 marks

16m- [L4]

- An excellent response that is fully focused on the key demands of the question
- Demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding that is precise and well selected
- Demonstrates analysis throughout which is well developed
- Applied effectively to the context
- Considers a balanced range of the issues in the question

Essay Planning Guide – 16m

	Point 1	Point 2
Make your point. • Use the wording in the question to convey your answer • Be clear and concise		
Analyse • Use connectives • Explain - why, how, impact and consequence • Refer to the "hooks" in the question to support your argument • What is it specifically about your point that helps answer the question? • Make sure there is a high degree of accuracy • Ensure your argument is logical • Don't make assumptions • Ensure you have explained how and why		
Evidence • Use the data provided • have you interpreted the data? What is it telling you? • what have you calculated? • Use of models/theorists • Use of wider reading		
Evaluate • Focus on the argument in the paragraph and challenge the question • Question the question • Include a depends on point • Link to the evaluative hook in the question		

Evaluation

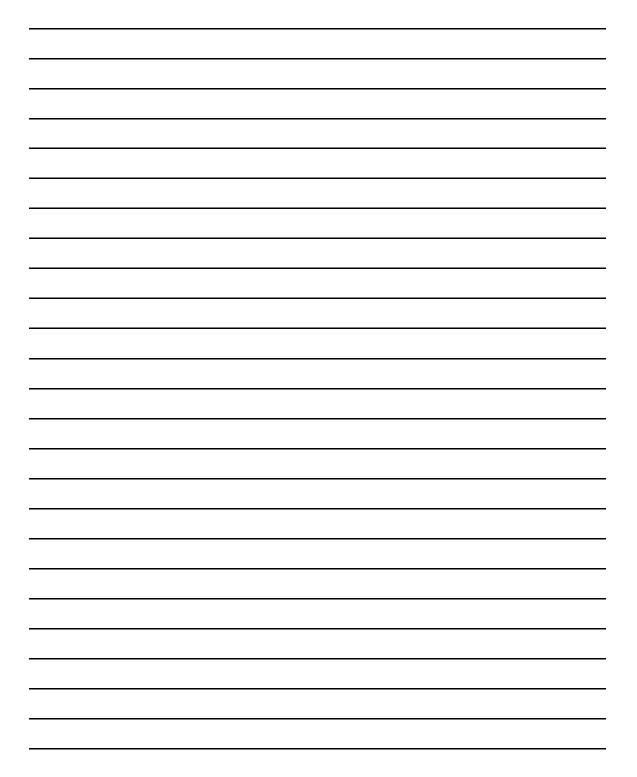|	
Decision To begin your evaluation, you should simply decide on which side of the argument you agree with.	
It depends on The success of every decision will depend on a number of factors, aspects which the firm should consider prior to finalising their decision. You should include these factors here. Think about financial and operational factors which firms consider often. These "depends on" factors should be explained in this sector. Aim to include at least three.	
Short- and long-term factors to consider Any decisions will result in both short- and long-term consequences. When deciding on your short-term factor think about the immediate impact the decision will have on the stakeholders. In this context it may be worth thinking about the impact over a 12month period. Long term consequences will have a wider impact for the future.	
Cost (opportunity) Having made your decision what is the option forgone? What will the firm not be able to do having made their choice? What opportunities have they sacrificed by making this choice?	
Other factors which might impact the decision This section is an opportunity for you to incorporate any other factors into your answer. For example, you may want to introduce internal and external factors which you have not already discuss. In addition, it is advisable to include points related to functional areas which have not already been include (HR,Ops,Finance,Marketing)	
Main point End your paragraph with a clear, concise sentence with reaffirm your main points and links directly to the hook in the question.	

How to structure a 25-mark question (Paper 1)

Level	The student will typically demonstrate	Marks
5	**An excellent response overall that is fully focused on the key demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding that is precise and well selected in relation to issues in the question • demonstrates analysis throughout which is well developed, is applied effectively to the context and considers a balanced range of the issues in the question • makes judgements or provides solutions which are built effectively on analysis, show balance and have a clear focus on the question as a whole throughout.	21–25
4	**A good response overall that focuses on many of the demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding of issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is well developed, applied effectively to the context and considers a range of issues in the question • makes judgements or provides solutions which are built on analysis, show balance and address the question as a whole.	16–20
3	**A reasonable response overall that focuses on some demands of the question.** Provides an answer to the question set that: • demonstrates a limited knowledge and understanding of a range of issues in the question or a good knowledge and understanding of relatively few issues in the question • demonstrates analysis which is developed, applied to the context and considers some of the issues in the question • makes judgements or provides solutions which are built on analysis, but lack balance and are not fully focused on the question as a whole.	11–15

25m- [L5]

- An excellent response overall that is fully focused on the key demands of the question
- Demonstrates a depth and range of knowledge and understanding that is precise and well selected Demonstrates analysis throughout which is well developed
- Applied effectively to the context and considers a balanced range of the issues in the question
- Makes judgements or provides solutions which are built effectively on analysis
- Shows balance and has a clear focus on the question as whole throughout

tutor2u | AQA A Level Paper 1 (25 Mark Essays) - Planning the Essay

Key Study Notes:

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tutor2u | AQA A Level Paper 1 (25 Mark Essays) - Two PeCAn PiEs

Key Study Notes:

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tutor2u | AQA A Level Paper 1 (25 Mark Essays) - The Essay Conclusion

Key Study Notes:

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Business A Level Revision Sessions

Here are the replays of the live-streamed revision A-Level Business sessions held by the tutor2u Business team. You can download all the PowerPoints used in each session here on the tutor2u Business channel: https://www.tutor2u.net/live/archive?...

AQA A level Revision Playlists

These playlists have been arranged into topic areas and contain key material linked to each aspect of the specification.

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