



Qualifications and  
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
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# GCSE subject criteria for business subjects

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## Introduction

1. GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in business and business-related subjects. They provide the framework within which an awarding body creates the detail of the specification.
2. Specifications must also meet the regulators' general requirements, including the common and GCSE criteria as defined in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications* (QCA/04/1293).
3. Subject criteria are intended to:
  - help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
  - ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained
  - ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to higher level general or vocational qualifications in business or related sectors of employment and training
  - help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed.
4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of business – GCSE in business studies, GCSE in applied business, GCSE in business studies and economics, GCSE in business and communication systems – must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

## Aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE specifications in business subjects should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and gain an insight into related sectors. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
6. GCSE specifications in business subjects must enable learners to:

- actively engage in the study of business and economics to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish facts and opinions, to build arguments and make informed judgements
- develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary issues in a range of local, national and global contexts
- appreciate the range of perspectives of different stakeholders in relation to business and economic activities
- consider the extent to which business and economic activity can be ethical and sustainable.

## **Subject content**

7. The content of GCSE specifications in business and business-related subjects must reflect the learning outcomes.
8. GCSE specifications in business and business-related subjects must require learners to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below.
9. GCSE specifications in business and business-related subjects must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
  - business activity – why and how businesses start, succeed and fail
  - the differing interests of stakeholders
  - competition – reaction and recognition, actual and potential
  - uncertainty – risk, reward and change
  - customers – their power, importance and needs
  - business within society – ethics and sustainability
  - decision making – use of data and problem-solving
  - changing use of ICT – in business and economic activities

- use of relevant terms, concepts and methods – to understand business and economic behaviour
10. GCSE specifications in business studies must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
- the dynamic nature of business, including motivations for social enterprise
  - local, national and international contexts
  - the integrated nature of business problems and solutions.
11. GCSE specifications in business studies must require learners to develop the ability to:
- apply a critical perspective to the theory and current practice of business
  - evaluate quantitative and qualitative evidence to make reasoned judgements
  - develop a conceptual framework of business within society.
12. GCSE specifications in applied business must require learners to:
- develop their knowledge and understanding through the investigation of a range of local and/or national business organisations
  - investigate how employers and employees operate in enterprising ways, develop their working relationships, and meet their various rights and responsibilities
  - develop and apply the following skills within business contexts:
    - practical skills – time management, personal organisation and action planning
    - presentational skills – addressing audiences using a variety of media and forms
    - personal skills – showing evidence of progression
    - interpersonal skills – communication and group work
    - cognitive skills – reflection and review of own and others' performances.

## Assessment objectives

13. All specifications in business and business-related subjects must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of concepts, issues and terminology	25–35
AO2	Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks	35–45
AO3	Analyse and evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and present appropriate conclusions	25–35

## Scheme of assessment

14. GCSE specifications in applied business must allocate a weighting of 40% to external assessment and a weighting of 60% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.
15. GCSE specifications in business studies and business-related subjects must allocate a weighting of 75% to external assessment and a weighting of 25% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment.
16. Each scheme of assessment must allow learners to demonstrate their attainment in a variety of ways using appropriate media. It must require candidates to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to real and/or realistic problems, relevant to the modern world, involving data from case studies where appropriate.
17. Question papers must be targeted at the full range of GCSE grades.

## Grade descriptions

18. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.
19. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Description
A	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of concepts, theories, issues and current practice in business. They understand and use business terminology accurately and appropriately.</p> <p>They plan and carry out effectively a range of investigations and tasks using a wide range of skills competently. They apply their knowledge and critical understanding effectively to select and organise information from a wide range of sources, and to investigate business organisations in a variety of contexts.</p> <p>They use and evaluate quantitative and qualitative evidence effectively with a high degree of accuracy to analyse problems and issues, and make informed and reasoned judgements to present reasoned and substantiated conclusions.</p>
C	<p>Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories, issues and current practice in business. They use business terminology appropriately.</p> <p>They plan and carry out investigations and tasks using a range of skills appropriately. They apply their knowledge and understanding to select and organise relevant information from a variety of sources to investigate business organisations in different contexts.</p>

	<p>They use and evaluate evidence to analyse problems and issues with some accuracy, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions that are supported by evidence.</p>
F	<p>Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of some basic aspects of concepts, theories, issues and current practice in business. They communicate their ideas using everyday language. They use some basic business terminology.</p> <p>They carry out straightforward investigations and tasks using a limited range of skills. They apply some knowledge and understanding to select and organise basic information from a limited range of sources to investigate business organisations.</p> <p>They identify some evidence to analyse problems and issues and make judgements. They present simple conclusions that are sometimes supported by evidence.</p>