Applied General Assignment Brief

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| **Qualification title** | Level 3 Certificate/Extended Certificate in Applied Business |
| **Unit code** | Y/507/6696 |
| **Unit title** | Business Dynamics |

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| **Learner name** |  | | |
| **Tutor/Assessor name** |  | | |
| **Assignment Title** | **Assignment 2 – Merlin Entertainments’ business potential** | | |
| **Date assignment issued** |  | **Submission Date** |  |

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| **Performance Criteria** | | | |
|  | **Pass** | **Merit** | **Distinction** |
| **Performance Outcome**  PO 3 and 4 | P7, P8, P9 and P10 | M6, M7, M8 and M9 | D3, D4, D5 and D6 |

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| **Tasks** | **Performance criteria covered** |
| Task 1 | P7, M6 and D3 |
| Task 2 | P8, M7 and D4 |
| Task 3 | P9, M8 and D5 |
| Task 4 | P10 and M9 (part) |
| Task 5 | M9 and D6 |

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| **Submission Checklist (please insert the items the learner should hand in)** | **Confirm submission** |
| Task 1 – completed competitive analysis template (‘Competitive position analysis’) |  |
| Task 2 – completed management policies template (‘Management policies to improve competitive position’) |  |
| Task 3 – completed strengths and weaknesses template (‘Strengths and weaknesses’) |  |
| Task 4 – completed external environment forces folder |  |
| Task 5 – completed business potential template (‘Business potential’) |  |
| **Learner - please confirm that you have proofread your submission** |  |

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| **Learner Authentication**  I confirm that the work and/or the evidence I have submitted for this assignment is my own. I have referenced any sources in my evidence (such as websites, text books). I understand that if I don’t do this, it will be considered as a deliberate deception and action will be taken. |
| **Learner Signature Date** |
| **Tutor declaration**  I confirm the learner’s work was conducted independently and under the conditions laid out by the specification. I have authenticated the learner’s work and am satisfied that the work produced is solely that of the learner. |
| **Tutor/Assessor Signature\* Date** |
| *\*Please record any assistance given to the learner beyond the group as a whole even if within the parameters of the specification* |

**For marking purposes only**

**Marking grid**

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| **Performance Criteria (PC) Achieved** | | | | | | | | | **1stsub\*** | **Resub\*** |
| **Pass** | **1st sub\***  **✓ / X\*\*** | **Resub\***  **✓ / X\*\*** | **Merit\*\*\*** | **1st sub\***  **✓ / X\*\*** | **Resub\***  **✓ / X\*\*** | **Distinction\*\*\*** | **1st sub\***  **✓ / X\*\*** | **Resub\***  **✓ / X\*\*** | **Number of PCs achieved** | **Number of PCs**  **achieved** |
| P7 |  |  | M6 |  |  | D3 |  |  |  |  |
| P8 |  |  | M7 |  |  | D4 |  |  |  |  |
| P9 |  |  | M8 |  |  | D5 |  |  |  |  |
| P10 |  |  | M9 |  |  | D6 |  |  |  |  |
| **Total PCs achieved:** | | | | | | | | |  |  |

***\* Sub= submission and Re-sub=Re-submission (Re-submission column to be completed only if the learner has re-submitted the assignment).***

***\*\* Achieved (✓ ) Not achieved (X). Please tick or cross for each performance criteria (PC).***

***\*\*\* Distinction and Merit criteria can be achieved only where the associated Merit and Pass criteria have been achieved first.***

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| **Tutor summative feedback for learner**  (*Note to tutors: this section should focus on what the learner has done well. Where a learner has not achieved a specific performance criterion or is likely to want to improve on a response to a performance criterion, then you may identify the issues related to the criterion, but should not provide explicit instructions on how the learner can improve their work to achieve the outstanding criteria.)\** |
| Feedback  Tutor name(print) and date |
| Resubmission Feedback  Tutor name(print) and date |

\* All tutor notes should be deleted before the template is used.

**Scenario:**

Merlin Entertainments (<http://www.merlinentertainments.biz/>) is a multinational business with an annual turnover of £1 740 million in 2019 (<https://www.merlinentertainments.biz/media/3068/merlin-entertainments-annual-report-and-accounts-2019.pdf>). In June 2019, its board of directors agreed to a takeover bid from a consortium of investors (Kirkbi, CPP Investment Board and The Blackstone Group). Merlin Entertainments now trades as a private limited company (Ltd) and, according to its 2019 annual report, it is the largest entertainments company in Europe with 130 attractions in 25 countries (<https://www.merlinentertainments.biz/media/3068/merlin-entertainments-annual-report-and-accounts-2019.pdf>):

* Theme parks including Alton Towers, Thorpe Park and Chessington World of Adventures
* ‘Midway Attractions’ including Madame Tussauds, Sea Life and The Dungeons
* Legoland resorts based around the world including the UK, Germany, USA and Malaysia

In assignment 1 you developed your understanding of how Merlin Entertainments organises its functional activities and you investigated its business advantages. In this final assignment, you will investigate and evaluate the competitive position held by Merlin Entertainments. You will also evaluate the business potential of Merlin Entertainments by conducting a SWOT analysis. Remember that evidence from assignment 1 could prove useful in assignment 2.

Merlin Entertainments is a large business and you will have to consider the areas that you focus on when investigating its competitive position and carrying out a SWOT analysis. You could, for example, focus on the UK market for several Merlin Entertainment brands. Alternatively, you could focus on a single brand and consider its operations across several countries. Finally, you could work within a group with each team member focussing on an aspect of Merlin Entertainments’ brands across several markets. In this case, you must ensure that each team member’s portfolio is their own work. **Your tutor will advise, but ultimately the work you produce must be your own**.

**Evidence required for assignment 2**

• **Consider business dynamics (PO3)**

* Completed competitive analysis template – ‘Competitive position analysis’ (Task 1 –
* guide time of 2 hours)
* Completed management policies template – ‘Management policies to improve competitive position’ (Task 2 – guide time of 2 hours)

•**Assess business potential (PO4)**

* Completed strengths and weaknesses template – ‘Strengths and weaknesses’ (Task 3 - guide time of 1 hour)
* Completed external environment forces folder (Task 4 – guide time of 1 hour)
* Completed business potential template – ‘Business potential’ (Task 5 – guide time of 1 hour)

**Activities:**

**Consider business dynamics (PO3): Task 1**

Your initial task requires you to research and outline the competitive position of Merlin Entertainments. You will need to carry out secondary research, for example using information from its corporate website (such as its annual reports), in order to consider Porter’s five forces. You should succinctly **outline** the forces (using an annotated mind-map) eg the competitive rivalry facing Merlin Entertainments. You will then **analyse** the significance of Porter’s five forces for the competitive position held by Merlin Entertainments eg how competitive rivalry might or might not be a key factor affecting its competitive position. You should consider all of the forces you initially outlined. You should then **evaluate** the extent to which Merlin Entertainments has a favourable competitive position, supporting your opinions with evidence.

You’re required to:

* Complete a competitive analysis template, which:
* Outlines Porters’ Five Forces for Merlin Entertainments
* Analyses the factors affecting Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position
* Evaluates the extent to which Merlin Entertainments has a favourable market position

**Task 2**

This task requires you to consider the role of management in improving Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position. You will need to research Merlin Entertainments’ corporate website and, possibly, access wider news reports on the Internet (e.g. from [http://www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk/)). You should initially **outline** two policies, pursued by senior managers, to improve Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position. Based on this understanding, you should then **explain** how these policies **could** have improved its competitive position (ie in theory, how might these policies have helped – what was their ‘potential’?). Finally, you should investigate the outcomes of the policies and **evaluate** the extent to which the polices **did** help to improve Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position. Keep the report focussed and concise, but always remember to support it using evidence.

You’re required to:

* Complete a management policies template, which:
* Outlines two management policies intended to improve Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position
* Explains how these policies could have improved Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position
* Evaluates the extent to which these policies did improve Merlin Entertainments’ competitive position

**Assess business potential (PO4):**

**Task 3**

Having completed tasks 1 and 2 of this assignment, and those of assignment 1, you are in a position to consider the strengths and weaknesses of Merlin Entertainments. You need to review all of your portfolio evidence created to date before you start this task. Your tutor will provide you with a template. Initially, you are required to **describe** the strengths and weaknesses of Merlin Entertainments. You should reference evidence from your portfolio across PO1, PO2 and PO3 (tasks 1 to 3) when completing these descriptions. You are required to describe at least **two** strengths and **two** weaknesses, but this should not stop you describing more than this if you think this necessary.

You will then produce a concise **explanation** of how these strengths and weaknesses affect the performance of Merlin Entertainments. Based on this, you will then **evaluate** the significance (importance) of these strengths and weaknesses. Remember – use evidence to back up your opinions. The evidence *should* already exist within your portfolio, so no need to carry out new research (hopefully!)

You’re required to:

* Complete a strengths and weaknesses template, which:
* Describes two strengths and two weaknesses of Merlin Entertainments
* Explains how these strengths and weaknesses affect the performance of Merlin
* Entertainments
* Evaluates the significance of these strengths and weaknesses for Merlin
* Entertainments’ performance

**Task 4**

In order to complete the ‘opportunities and threats’ section of your SWOT analysis you will need to research Merlin Entertainments’ external environment forces ie economic, technological and social/ethical. You do not need to cover all three forces, but you must cover at least two eg economic and technological. Once you have collated the data, you should attempt the following.

You’re required to:

* Complete an external environment forces folder, containing:
* Collected and collated data for four distinct sets of data relevant to Merlin Entertainments’ external environment forces
* An analysis of the data, identifying possible opportunities and threats facing Merlin Entertainments.

**Task 5**

Having completed tasks 1 to 4, you are now in a position to consider the impact of Merlin Entertainments’ opportunities and threats on its business potential ie its ability to thrive and expand. You should use your findings from task 4 to complete the opportunities and threats section of the business potential template provided by your tutor. Using this, and your other findings within your portfolio, you should then **evaluate** Merlin Entertainments’ business potential – does the business have the potential to continue to achieve its vision and aims?

You’re required to:

* Complete a business potential template, which:
* Analyses the possible opportunities and threats facing Merlin Entertainments (referencing evidence from task 4)
* Evaluates Merlin Entertainments’ potential considering these opportunities and threats.