

AS and A-level Business

A companion guide to
our new specifications

Strategy

Find out more at:
aqa.org.uk/business

New AS and A-levels

What the changes mean for you

A-levels are changing across the board, with government introducing new regulations about subject content and assessment.

All subjects are moving from modular to linear assessment, with exams at the end of a two-year A-level course. The AS becomes a stand-alone qualification, which doesn't contribute to the A-level grade.

Faced with change, we've taken a fresh look at our qualifications, working with teachers, universities and others to raise the bar. We've refreshed and updated our offer, building on the best of what went before. With the needs of teachers and students at the heart of what we do, we're making the move to the new specifications as simple as possible.

What this means for Business

Whatever you think of the changes, for Business we've developed new specifications that will inspire your students. We've updated the content, improved our support, developed new resources and enhanced our assessment to ensure that your students receive the result they deserve.

Read the specifications:
aqa.org.uk/business

Speak to us: call 01483 477 863 or email business-studies@aqa.org.uk

Find out more about changes to A-levels: aqa.org.uk/alevelchanges

AS and A-level Business: key dates

June 2014	Draft specifications available from aqa.org.uk
July and September 2014	Launch events: face-to-face and online
September 2014 (expected – dependent on Ofqual)	Accredited specifications available from aqa.org.uk
September 2015	First teaching of new AS and A-level Business
Summer 2016	First examinations for new AS level Business
Summer 2017	First examinations for new A-level Business

Our response to change

Turning new rules into classroom inspiration

When change comes you can ignore it, live with it or embrace it. We decided to embrace it, seizing this chance to listen and learn before acting to produce best in class qualifications.

As an education charity and the largest provider of qualifications in England and Wales, meeting the needs of teachers and students is central to what we do. Great teaching brings every subject to life and our new specifications are designed to support you in the classroom with updated content, resources and support.

But we couldn't do this on our own.

Listening

Government and the regulator told us the new rules. We listened to be clear about what was needed.

Working together

Through workshops, seminars and conferences, we worked with thousands of teachers across all subjects. We wanted to know what you needed – not guess what you might want. Your views, hopes and aspirations have been crucial.

Learning lessons

With all of the insights and ideas from so many teachers, we paid attention and refined our new specifications to ensure we hit the mark.

Taking to the road

With two double decker buses our staff visited 24 locations, meeting teachers from 274 schools and colleges. These teachers gave us more feedback on our draft specifications and materials.

Building support

While the views of teachers have been crucial, we've also worked with universities, subject associations and others. This ensured that our new specifications have the content, credibility and rigour to support your students into the next stage of their lives, whether in higher education or employment.

Creating something new

Now we have created new specifications, support and resources that will inspire learning and help to realise potential.

See how we're supporting teachers through the changes to A-levels at:
aqa.org.uk/changes-to-exams

AS and A-level Business

What's changed and what's stayed the same

More teachers choose our AS and A-level Business courses than any other – and their feedback told us that they really enjoyed teaching our previous specifications. We've retained the popular and successful elements of these, refreshing the content to create engaging and up-to-date specifications that you will enjoy teaching.

A new philosophy

The move to linear assessment means a more holistic approach to Business, which will give your students the chance to integrate their knowledge and understanding of different areas. Where modular exams tended to take topics in isolation, we now encourage students to join the dots and make connections.

What's in a name?

Our previous specification was called Business Studies. Under the new regulations, it's just Business, but while the name has changed our high standards haven't.

Refreshed content

We've worked with teachers and universities, acting on feedback and taking into account changes to the business landscape in recent years. So while a lot of the content will be familiar we now have a greater focus on digital technology and e-commerce, international business, globalisation and business ethics. It's what your students read and hear about in the news, backed by up-to-date case studies to bring the subject to life.

More papers at A-level

The new regulations mean that at A-level, students will now take three two-hour exam papers at the end of the two-year course.

The importance of data

Ofqual's new rules mean that the assessment of quantitative skills such as interpreting and analysing data must represent a minimum of 10% of the overall AS and A-level marks.

“ Our philosophy and approach has changed...we're building an understanding of the subject as a whole ”

Nicola Temple is Qualifications Manager for our AS and A-level Business specifications. Nicola has been with AQA for seven years and has a background in education.

“With the new regulations we have to make changes, but as the market leader we felt that we were already meeting the needs of teachers and students – and that's based on feedback from teachers and universities. But we've taken this chance to refine, refresh and improve the specification without making wholesale changes. A lot of the core content will be familiar, but it has been brought up to date with a bigger emphasis on digital technology, e-commerce and international business.

What the move away from a modular to a linear qualification has done is change our philosophy and approach. The modular qualifications tended to take topics in isolation, but now we have integrated some of these with a view to building a holistic understanding of the subject as a whole.

For the first time in AS and A-level Business we're introducing multiple-choice questions. These have been used successfully for years in many subjects and having them for Business lets us assess a broader range of content. Also for the first time



Nicola Temple, Qualifications Manager

quantitative skills are included in the subject criteria. It's always been an important area for universities, but it's something we've been doing anyway, so we have plenty of experience in this area.

I'm sure teachers will feel reassured that our AS and A-level specifications are completely co-teachable. Plus we've revamped our resources and brought publishers on board to help develop some exciting new materials.”

Why choose our new AS and A-level Business specifications?

1 A strong foundation

Our new specifications build on their predecessors, which were well thought of by teachers, students and universities. Students will benefit from a more, dynamic approach that shows the inter-related nature of business.

2 Co-teachability of AS and A-level

The new specifications enable you to teach AS and year one A-level students in the same class, making it easier for timetabling and resourcing. The content of year one of the A-level is the full content for the AS. Your students can also be taught separately if you prefer, so flexibility is built in.

3 Great resources and support

Your planning, teaching and assessment will be supported every step of the way with a suite of new materials we have developed for the new specifications. But whether you've taken Business with us before or are moving from another exam board, you'll still be able to use many of your existing resources, saving time and effort.

4 Build skills for work or higher education

Your students will develop useful skills in problem solving, decision-making and critical analysis that will help in higher education or a career.

5 Quantifiably better

You can be confident that we'll provide the support needed to help you teach quantitative skills to your students and assess them in a balanced way. The new requirement that these skills count for a minimum of 10% of the overall assessment is not a change for us as we've been doing it anyway, so you can count on the same high standards.

6 If you also teach AS and/or A-level Economics...

You will only have to understand one style of mark scheme and one style of resources. We'll be holding introductory meetings for both subjects on the same days for your convenience.



What's in the specifications?

How are they assessed?

Business is front-page news. The way companies operate is under greater scrutiny than ever before, while TV programmes like *The Apprentice* and *Dragon's Den* have raised the profile of Business to a new generation.

Our new specifications bring the subject up-to-date, enabling students to engage with, explore and understand business behavior and develop a critical understanding of what business is and does.

Assessment objectives

Set by Ofqual, our exams will measure how well students have achieved these:

1. 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.
2. Apply knowledge and understanding to various business contexts to show how individuals and organisations are affected by and respond to issues.
3. Analyse issues within business, showing an understanding of the impact on individuals and organisations of external and internal influences.

4. Evaluate quantitative and qualitative information to make informed judgements and propose evidence-based solutions to business issues.

AS level content

The AS course includes the following topics.

1. What is business?
2. Managers, leadership and decision making.
3. Decision making to improve marketing performance.
4. Decision making to improve operational performance.
5. Decision making to improve financial performance.
6. Decision making to improve human resource performance.

AS level assessment

Assessment is by two one-and-a-half hour written exams at the end of the course.

Paper 1: Two compulsory sections, including multiple choice, short answer questions and data response questions.

Paper 2: One compulsory case study consisting of seven questions.

A-level content

The A-level incorporates the same six topics as AS, plus the following additional topics:

1. Analysing the strategic position of a business.
2. Choosing strategic direction.
3. Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies.
4. Managing strategic change.

A-level assessment

The A-level is assessed by three two hour written exams at the end of the course.

Paper 1: Multiple-choice questions, short answer and two essays.

Paper 2: Three compulsory data response questions.

Paper 3: One compulsory case study consisting of six questions.

Testing quantitative skills

Both the AS and A-level assess quantitative skills, making up a minimum of 10% of the overall marks. The skills tested include ratios, averages, fractions, percentages and calculation of profit and loss.

Find out more

Read the full specifications at:
aqa.org.uk/business

The results your students deserve

Assessment you can trust

After all of their hard work, you need to be confident that your students' work is marked fairly, consistently and reliably. That's our priority too.

Getting the marking right

The quality of marking is at the heart of our assessment procedures. As before, both AS and A-level will be 100% assessed by examinations.

- We produce clear, consistent question papers using a variety of question types and real-life cases studies.
- For the first time in AS and A-level Business we are introducing multiple choice questions, which will help to test a broader range of knowledge and understanding.
- Our well structured mark schemes will give you clear insights into what is expected from your students.
- We have exemplar materials with student answers and commentary from our most senior examiners so you can see how the mark scheme is applied.
- With compulsory topics to be examined it is easier for markers to ensure comparability when marking responses.

Understanding assessment

To show exactly how we award grades and give you a better understanding of how assessment works, we've produced a short animated film.

- Visit aqa.org.uk/explaining-assessment to see our Explaining assessment and How a specification is created videos
- You can analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA), our free online results analysis tool. Register at aqa.org.uk/era
- For information about results, including grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit aqa.org.uk/results

Resources to support great teaching

We're here to support you through the changes and we've worked closely with experienced, practising teachers to develop high quality materials and support that will help you teach memorable lessons.

This will include:

- free face-to-face launch and 'preparing to teach' events, giving you insights into the new specifications directly from AQA's Business subject team to you
- practice exam papers, enabling your students to understand the type and style of questions they will be expected to answer

- schemes of work for the new specifications
- AQA-approved textbooks and digital resources produced with established publishers for the new specifications
- additional guidance for the new and updated subject content to help you get to grips with the new specification from day one
- training and professional development opportunities.

You'll also be able to contact our Business team by telephone and email. Our trained staff will be happy to help.



Find out more

Check what courses and events are available:
coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Read more about professional development opportunities:
aqa.org.uk/professional-development

Who's Who

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Keep in touch

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To receive regular updates about
Business, register with us at:
aqa.org.uk/update

The information in this guide is based on the draft specifications submitted to Ofqual in June 2014, and is subject to change. We will publish the accredited specification and specimen question papers as soon as we receive Ofqual accreditation expected in autumn.

You will always find the most up to date information on our website at www.aqa.org.uk/business
aqa.org.uk

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