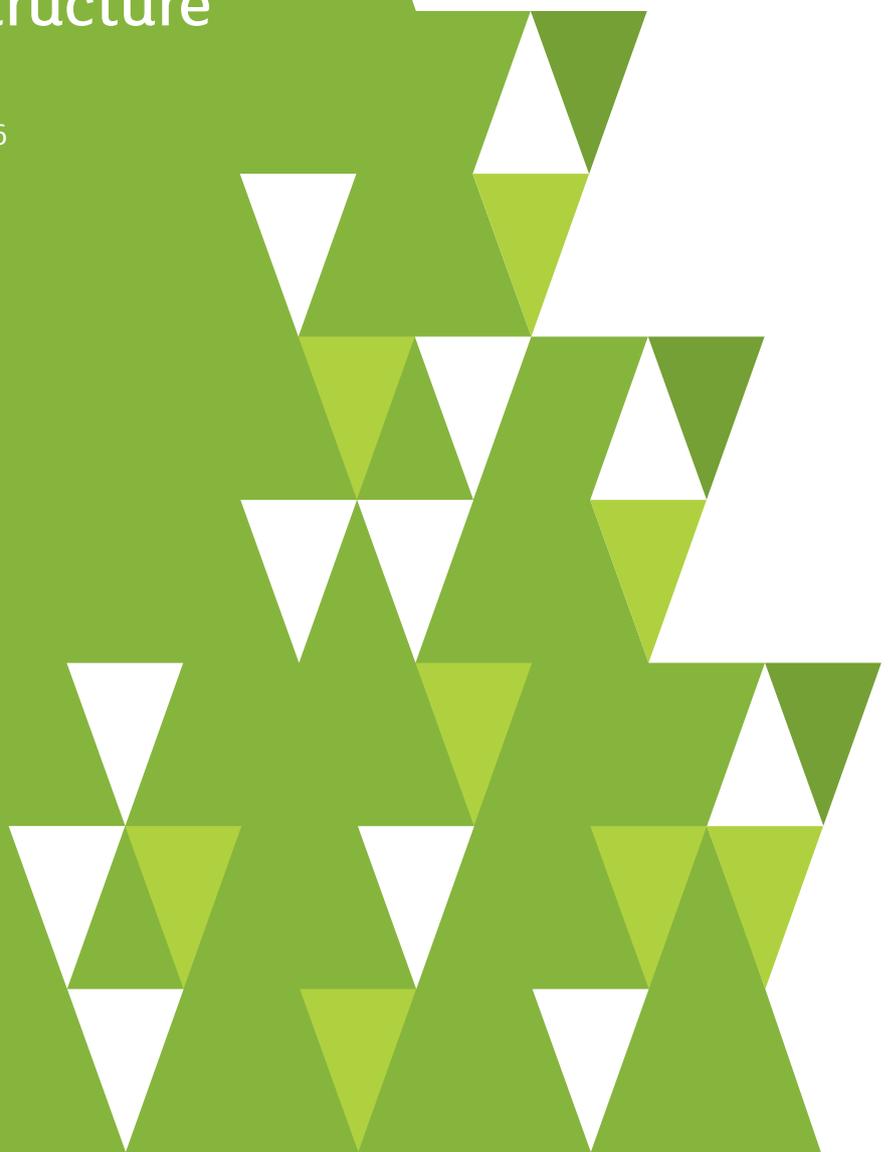


GCE



Revised GCE  
Guidance Material  
**Business Studies**  
AS Examination Structure

For first teaching from September 2016





## Question Paper Structure

In both AS1 and AS2 question papers the mark structure will be as follows:

Question No	Assessment Objectives				Possible Command Words	Marks per Question
a	AO1	AO2			Explain/Calculate/Construct	4
b	AO1	AO2	AO3		Analyse/Calculate/Construct/Interpret	8
c	AO1	AO2	AO3		Analyse/Calculate/Construct/Interpret	10
d	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Evaluate	18
Total Marks Available per AO	20	20	22	18	Total Marks available per Question	40

## Command Words

There is an array of command words that can be used by the examiner in each question. A further selection will be listed on the GCE Business Studies microsite.

Question	Command Word	Detail
a	Explain/Calculate/Construct	Definitions and applications of key business terms in the specifications. Possible quantitative skills also.
b	Analyse/Calculate/Construct/Interpret	Possible Quantitative Skills computations and analysis of findings.
c	Analyse/Calculate/Construct/Interpret	Analysis of Stimulus/Case Study, Possible QS skills also.
d	Evaluate	Evaluation

## Quantitative Skills

In the Specification on page 31 are a list of Quantitative Skills (QS) competences that the candidate must acquire.

The assessment of quantitative skills includes at least 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. The quantitative skills may be assessed across the assessment objectives.

To accommodate quantitative skills marks, the question papers may now include a range of standard graphical forms in the stimulus. Candidates must be able to interpret, apply and analyse information in written, graphical and numerical forms. Additional command words will now include:

- Calculate;
- Construct; and
- Interpret.

The quantitative skills questions can originate from all areas of the specification but does lend itself to some specific areas such as finance.

### Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

Candidates must demonstrate their quality of written communication. This is assessed in the responses to questions and tasks that require extended writing. No discrete marks are awarded, but a high standard of QWC together with the required response will allow candidates to access the highest mark bands.

### Use of Formulae

There is a schedule of formula provided for use by centres.

Formulae will be given in AS papers if required, (but not at A2).

At AS level the specific formulae identified in the specifications include Break Even, Return on Capital Employed (ROCE), Net Profit Margin, Current Ratio and Gearing.

Candidates must be careful when expressing figures to include values, negative signs as well as decimal places where appropriate. Candidates are also advised to include their workings as they may gain marks by demonstrating knowledge and application even though their final answer may be incorrect.

The answer to a calculation must be in the format identified in the question. If the question states “to two decimal places” then the student must compute to three decimal places and select the correct answer to two decimal place.

### Question Marking

Papers/Scripts will now be marked in Levels as shown below.

Question	Levels				Marks
	1	2	3	4	
a					4
b	1–3	4–6	7–8		8
c	1–3	4–7	8–10		10
d	1–5	6–9	10–13	14–18	18

Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	Basic Response	Good Response	Excellent Response
	(1–3)	(4–7)	(8–10)
<b>c</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge &amp; understanding;</li> <li>• Inappropriate application;</li> <li>• Basic analysis; and</li> <li>• Basic written communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good accurate knowledge and understanding;</li> <li>• Mostly appropriate application;</li> <li>• Focused analysis; and</li> <li>• Good quality of written communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive and relevant knowledge and understanding;</li> <li>• Appropriate application;</li> <li>• Well focused and sound analysis; and</li> <li>• Excellent written communication.</li> </ul>

Question	Basic Response	Satisfactory Response	Good Response	Excellent Response
	(15)	(6–9)	(10–13)	(14–18)
<b>d</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge &amp; understanding;</li> <li>• Inappropriate application;</li> <li>• Basic judgements based on limited analysis; and</li> <li>• Basic written communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory knowledge &amp; understanding;</li> <li>• Satisfactory application;</li> <li>• Suitable appropriate judgement; and</li> <li>• Satisfactory quality written communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound and accurate knowledge and understanding;</li> <li>• Mostly appropriate application;</li> <li>• Appropriate, clear, logical judgement based on well focused analysis; and</li> <li>• Good quality of written communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding;</li> <li>• Comprehensive application;</li> <li>• Highly appropriate, clear and logical judgement based on well focused and sound analysis; and</li> <li>• Excellent written communication.</li> </ul>

## Assessment Objectives

### AO1 Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge is what teachers spend most class time on and is the focal point of most candidates' revision. The candidates are required to have a comprehensive and precise knowledge that generate good exam marks.

Knowledge is precise, concise definitions of the topic areas in the specification. It is also a good understanding of the key concepts within the subject. Knowledge ensures that the student will understand the text and exam question.

### AO2 Application

To show application, you need to select the key factors, events and concepts from the question stimulus. Application is the skill of bringing knowledge to bear in the business context. **No reward is given to a candidate who simply drops the business name into the argument.** Application must show recognition of some specific business relevant to the question stimulus.

### AO3 Analysis

Analysis is building up an argument using higher order skills in relevant business theory in a way that answers the question specifically and shows understanding of cause and effect. There are three common mistakes that hampers the candidates' ability to provide comprehensive analysis:

1. rushed reading of stimulus material;
2. rushed reading of the question; and
3. inability to build on business theory.

### AO4 Evaluation

Evaluation counts for 20% of AS exams. Evaluation is a skill that is worth at least two grades and needs to be well developed.

Evaluation is the ability to draw conclusions from evidence that show judgement and are supported by a logical argument. For an opinion to become judgement it needs supporting argument that reflects the business or economic situation. There is no right answer to a judgemental question so long as it supported by argument. Make a judgement and support it, do not sit on the fence. Candidates are sometimes reluctant to put forward a view and then justify it. Sitting on the fence and saying "there are many advantages and disadvantages" is neither evaluation or justifying your view.

In the past centres have taught to a well-rehearsed style to address evaluative questions. While this style will still gain credit it is envisaged that different approaches can equally achieve credit. Evaluation now requires a much more in-depth approach when responding to evaluation questions.

## **Key to examiners annotation of candidates' scripts**

Examiners will be instructed to annotate candidates' work in the following way:

1. Use the following abbreviations and indicate in the margin where the student has demonstrated each of the assessment components e.g.

\* Kn = knowledge

\* App = application

\* An = analysis

\* Ev = evaluation

2. Award an overall Level using the 'descriptors' outlined in the mark scheme.

For example a student achieving Level 2 in Question (d) will have produced a satisfactory response demonstrating some knowledge and understanding, limited application and a judgement based on limited analysis. Satisfactory written communication.

However, a student achieving Level 4 will have provided comprehensive, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding, appropriate application, highly appropriate, clear and logical judgement based on well focused and sound analysis. Excellent written communication.

It is advisable that teachers implement this system of annotation from the outset and take time to explain it to candidates. Furthermore, candidates should be provided with a copy of the 'descriptors' outlined in the mark scheme so they can understand more clearly the significance of the Levels indicated in their work. This should eliminate the need for teachers to give a written explanation about the Level awarded thus saving valuable time. Moreover, this provides an opportunity for candidates to develop greater independence in their learning so they can enter into more focused dialogue with the teacher about improving their level of attainment.

## **Timing**

Timing is crucial. Candidates must get the timing right in examinations. With the reduction in questions at AS it is envisaged that centres will require candidates to complete a time allocation for each question on their exam paper. Planning the answering of questions must now be a priority for the candidates, in particular for q(d).



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