

2016

BUSINESS STUDIES A LEVEL  
STUDENT HANDBOOK

SUCCESS CAPITAL  
FINANCE BUSINESS  
TRADE PROFIT  
Wealth  
GROWTH  
Commerce MARKET OPPORTUNITY  
ENTERPRISE

## BUSINESS STUDIES A LEVEL AT DEREHAM SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Welcome to your A Level Business Studies course. This booklet is designed to outline the structure of the course you will be following, to help you with your studies and to inform you of what we expect of you as students. Our aim is that you should thoroughly enjoy your Business Studies course – your teachers will always be willing to discuss your progress, give advice and help and direct you towards your highest achievement. For your part, we ask that you pay careful attention to our requirements of you during Year 12 and Year 13.

Your teachers are Mr Hodges ([Robert\\_Hodges@neatherd.org](mailto:Robert_Hodges@neatherd.org)) and Mrs Iwanczyk ([SIwanczyk@dsfc.org.uk](mailto:SIwanczyk@dsfc.org.uk))

### The AQA Syllabus Subject content

- 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
- 7 Analysing the strategic position of a business (A-level only)
- 8 Choosing strategic direction (A-level only)
- 9 Strategic methods: how to pursue strategies (A-level only)
- 10 Managing strategic change (A-level only)

Each of the 10 bullet points must be individually assessed. For each assessment students must receive feedback and they're expected to respond to this feedback. Students will receive an assessment calendar. Students will have a formal internal exam at Christmas of year 12 and at the end of year 12. In year 13 students will have a formal internal exam at Christmas of year 13 and a class one before their examinations. Students must complete the tracking sheet

### The AQA Syllabus AS Assessment

Paper 1: Business 1	+	Paper 2: Business 2
<b>What's assessed</b> 1 – 6 above		<b>What's assessed</b> 1 – 6 above
<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes</li><li>• 80 marks in total</li><li>• 50% of AS</li></ul>		<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes</li><li>• 80 marks in total</li><li>• 50% of AS</li></ul>
<b>Questions</b> Three compulsory sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Section A has 10 multiple choice questions (MCQs) worth 10 marks</li><li>• Section B has short answer questions worth approximately 20 marks</li><li>• Section C has two data response stimuli with questions worth approximately 25 marks.</li></ul>		<b>Questions</b> One compulsory case study consisting of approximately seven questions.

## The AQA Syllabus A Level Assessment

<b>Paper 1: Business 1</b>	<b>Paper 2: Business 2</b>	<b>Paper 3: Business 3</b>
<b>What's assessed</b> All content above	<b>What's assessed</b> All content above	<b>What's assessed</b> All content above
<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>written exam: 2 hours</li><li>100 marks in total</li><li>33.3% of A-level</li></ul>	<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>written exam: 2 hours</li><li>100 marks in total</li><li>33.3% of A-level</li></ul>	<b>Assessed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>written exam: 2 hours</li><li>100 marks in total</li><li>33.3% of A-level</li></ul>
<b>Questions</b> Three compulsory sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section A has 15 multiple choice questions (MCQs) worth 15 marks.</li><li>Section B has short answer questions worth 35 marks.</li><li>Sections C and D have two essay questions (choice of one from two and one from two) worth 25 marks each.</li></ul>	<b>Questions</b> Three data response compulsory questions worth approximately 33 marks each and made up of three or four part questions.	<b>Questions</b> One compulsory case study followed by approximately six questions.

Students will study business in a variety of contexts (eg large/small, UK focused/ global, service/manufacturing) and consider:

- the importance of the context of business in relation to decision making
- the interrelated nature of business activities and how they affect competitiveness
- the competitive environment and the markets in which businesses operate
- the influences on functional decisions and plans including ethical and environmental issues
- the factors that might determine whether a decision is successful eg the quality of data and the degree of uncertainty
- how technology is changing the way decisions are made and how businesses operate and compete
- the impact on stakeholders of functional decisions and their response to such decisions
- use of non-quantitative and quantitative data in decision making (including the interpretation of index numbers and calculations such as ratios and percentages).

Strategic decision making (A-level only)

The study of strategic decision making should build on the study of decision making in the functional areas.

- the impact of technology on strategic decision making
- the influences of Corporate Social Responsibility, ethical and environmental issues on strategic decisions
- the difficulties in forecasting future trends
- the importance of assessing feasibility and risk when making strategic decisions
- the impact on stakeholders of strategic decisions and their response to such decisions.

Students will study and engage with the business world. You will be required to follow business developments and think critically about contemporary business issues. Most of the assessment material is based on real business situations. By examining and thinking critically about real business situations you will gain an insight into different contexts which will help you to understand the key issues in any situation and compare and contrast this with other situations and apply your understanding.

To achieve these ends teachers will adopt a range of teaching methods to ensure that you acquire all the skills and knowledge required for the examination. However, much of the emphasis of A Level is focused on how you study

beyond the classroom and, in our experience, the final grade you obtain will reflect how much personal research and further study you complete in your own time.

### **Homework**

Each of your two teachers will set between two to three hours homework per week. This may be further reading, follow-up activities, completion exercises or more formal essays or assessments (see 'Assessment' below). It is essential that you meet deadlines and anyone who continually misses deadlines will be asked to discuss their progress and work with their Head of Year. Work received after the deadline date will not be given a mark/grade but will receive comments.

### **Background reading, note taking and how to research**

Business Studies is such a wide subject that the greater the amount of reading you are able to do the fuller your knowledge, particularly of recent business and financial news. Teachers should provide you with a list of relevant texts. Your base level of reading is to ensure that you have read and noted the relevant chapter in your core text.

In addition :

- Look through other references – skim read to see if they provide additional information. DO NOT COPY OUT EVERY WORD. Read through an article and then make notes, quote examples and maybe note page references. Avoid copying straight from the text; in that way you might remember something of what you have written.
- Use the library – use the indexes of books whose titles look suitable to find relevant information. Ask the librarian for help.
- Use the Internet for case study material but make sure you read the information and that it is relevant to your research.
- The department is slowly building up a pack of relevant newspaper articles – there may be some available or you might find your own on a topic.

### **Organisation of your files & expectations of the tracking document**

You will need a supply of ringbinders or lever arch files as Business Studies generates a huge amount of notes and paper. It is essential that your file is well organised; in our experience a well-ordered file aids revision and leads to higher grades. Follow the following guidelines:

- File chronologically and include any photocopied sheets at the correct place
- Underline or highlight titles and keywords. You may wish to devise your own index and/or glossary
- Include background reading notes at the correct place in your file
- Do NOT start a new piece of paper every lesson; apart from wasting paper it means that continuity is lost and often pages become disorganised. Bring your file to every lesson.
- NOTE taking – unlike GCSE when you were probably 'spoonfed' with information, staff will often talk or lead discussions with you during lessons and it is essential that you take your own notes (they will not always say 'write this down'!) Do not write every word. Develop your own shorthand code, learn to write quickly (although your notes need to be ordered and legible they don't need to be pristinely neat) and try to be discerning in what you write down. Summarize the main ideas and arguments in headings.
- Case studies are particularly important at A Level. Make sure you highlight these in your notes. You may wish to research further a case study introduced in lessons and/or research other, relevant studies.
- Staff will check your files regularly. Do not leave it to the previous night to get your file into order. Files will be periodically checked by your teachers and the quality assessed for screening.

### **Writing extended answers and essays**

You will be required to write extended answers to questions. This will be longer than what you will be used to writing for GCSE. The key with these answers is to be concise and make sure you answer the question. Your teacher will guide you with the best way to approach these questions.

Essay writing is an important A level tool. The basic rule is DO NOT write down everything you know about a subject but do be ANALYTICAL of the question, drawing on case study material at every opportunity

## Structure

Guide your reader through your answer

Introduction:

- Define your terms
- Indicate the main gist of your argument
- At least one third of a side

Subsequent paragraphs:

- each should take up one theme e.g. one 'factor' and expand it, always including an example. Be analytical

NOT descriptive at all times

- one third to one half side per paragraph

Conclusion

- a summary of the key ideas
- It is often good to end by indicating the complexity of the issue under discussion
- At least one third of a side.

## Other Sources of Business Information

- Newspapers: The Independent, Financial Times & Guardian in the library regularly have news/features. In addition, business is a dynamic subject and contemporary news items may be relevant to your course
- Magazines, and journals, for example Business Review

## Policies

Literacy: Schemes of work and lesson plans include opportunities for you to develop speaking and listening skills such as:

- individual and group presentations
  - opportunities for discussion and debate
  - group work, drama activities and role play
  - opportunities to teach parts of the lesson.
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- When asking questions in lessons, staff will expect and insist on fully articulated answers using appropriate subject specific vocabulary.
  - All teachers will have high expectations in terms of the quality of your written expression whether or not this carries specific marks in the assessment criteria.
  - You will be given examples of model essays/answers where appropriate, with a focus on good structure, grammar, use of subject specific vocabulary, accurate spelling and expression.
  - All written work will be marked for accuracy of spelling and grammar using the following notations:
    - Underline spelling errors (thier)
    - Wavy line under examples of poor expression
    - Circle examples of incorrect punctuation
    - // to indicate where a new paragraph needs to be introduced.
  - Other ways of improving literacy in the department are:
    - giving out/you making glossaries of key terms/ subject specific terminology at the start of the course, within the student handbook or at the start of each new topic
    - Typing out subject specific terms, which are laminated and put up on the walls of the classroom
    - Creation of laminated sets of pairs – word/definition for quick starters and plenaries.

## Stretch & Challenge

We believe that you should be provided with a suitably stimulating and challenging environment, both curricular and extra-curricular, which will allow your abilities and talents to flourish. Schemes of work make provision for differentiation including enrichment and extension activities; these include:

- Additional articles and research that allow you to access further detail around key topic areas.
- A large selection of documentaries and films that offer you the opportunity to enhance your subject knowledge.
- Targeted high order questioning by teachers for the most able students.

- Students to teach more challenging material to their peers or access more complicated subject matter should be made available.

### Special Educational Needs

All students are entitled to equality of regard and equality of opportunity irrespective of particular needs or disabilities. The SIS department is committed to ensuring that this core belief permeates all aspects of teaching and learning and that the special educational needs of individual students are catered for wherever possible. Wherever possible teachers should make every effort to make all teaching and learning strategies accessible to all and, where appropriate create specific strategies to ensure that students have access to all learning. Students should also feel confident in communicating any specific needs or requirements to their teacher where necessary.

### IT in Business Studies

- All students are encouraged to use word processing for their essays and assessments
- You are encouraged make use of the Internet. However ensure that you make full use of it as a learning tool. Avoid copying information from the first site in a Google search. Look at information carefully before you make use of it. For tips on searching for information on the Internet ask your teacher.
- A number of presentations using power-point will be expected

### Homework and Assessments

You will be set weekly assignments from each teacher which you can expect to take 2-3 hours. Some work set will be more substantial in nature – an essay, past structured question(s), research assignment. You will have at least 4 of these a term from each member of staff teaching the course. Staff will give you detailed feedback on your assessments – both written and verbal – which should help you set personal targets for your progress. From previous years examinations the grade boundaries are as follows:

Mark /grade equivalent

A = 80%+

B = 70%+

C = 60%+

D = 50%+

E = 40%+

A tracking system operates in the Business Studies department, which is designed to monitor your progress during your studies.

Your 4 standard assessments for each module are entered into the departmental database. This enables us to track your progress throughout the course and identify your areas of strength, whilst targeting additional help and advice to help develop your weaknesses.

### The Move from Year 12 to Year 13, Predicted Grades and Reports

Students will be accepted into Year 13 if they achieve an D grade or above in their summer internal examination. We may also ask you to pay your full examination entry fee at the end of Year 13 if we do not feel you have met the requirements of the course in terms of meeting deadlines with work, regular attendance and a right attitude. Students who are causing concern will be asked to discuss their progress with the subject leaders from each high school and with Mrs Meigh and/or Mrs Iwanczyk.

### Predicted Grades

Universities, Colleges, future employers and the exam boards require teachers to predict your A level grade. This is usually done in September of the Year 13 and we will be using the following criteria for our predictions:

70% of judgement = Internal summer exam result

30% of judgement = your score on 8 assessment pieces in Year 13

You will be informed of your predicted grade at the beginning of the Autumn Term in Year 13.

### Reporting to Parents

Staff will write a report at the end of the Summer term in Year 12. At that time staff will discuss your progress with you but you are welcome to approach staff at any stage throughout the year if you have any worries and concerns. We encourage students to attend the Parents' Evenings with their parents when an honest three-way discussion can take

place. Staff will always contact parents at other times of the year if there are particular concerns. In addition Progress Reviews (a snapshot of your progress) will take place three times in Year 12 and Year 13. This information will also be discussed with you by staff and targets for improvement will be negotiated.

### Progress Reviews

Once per term teachers are required to carry out Progress Reviews for each of their groups. Students are graded on three key areas of their learning (see the criteria below). These grades should be discussed with students. Ideally staff grades should be shared for consistency across the subject.

### Grades

These should be noted in teacher planners and also shared/discussed with students.

**Attendance** – Attendance is expected to be at 95% or above.

**Alps Target grade** – The ALPS Target Grade is based on the student’s average point score at GCSE and is aspirational. If achieved it places them in the top 25% of all students nationally.

**Average grade achieved** – An average of the grades achieved in work assessed by the teacher this term.

**Teacher forecast grade** – A grade based on what the teacher believes the student is likely to achieve at the end of the course based on current performance.

### **Attitude to Learning**

		<b>Attitude to Learning</b>
1	Outstanding	Shows total commitment to lessons by being fully prepared, engaging in all activities presented and completing all work set to a very high standard. Extension activities are willingly undertaken and often self-directed
2	Good	Shows a good level of commitment including preparation for lessons, engagement in all activities presented and completing all work to a good standard. Extension activities are undertaken and are sometimes self-directed
3	Requires Improvement	Commitment is variable. There is sometimes evidence of planning for lessons, activities are sometimes engaged in with enthusiasm and work is completed but not always to the best of the students’ ability. There is little evidence of extension activities being undertaken and little self-direction
4	Unacceptable	Little evidence of commitment to the course. No preparation for lessons appears to be undertaken, activities are reluctantly engaged in and work set is either not completed or completed at an unacceptably low standard. No evidence of either extension activities being undertaken or of self-directed work

### **Organisational skills**

		<b>Organisational Skills</b>
1	Outstanding	Excellent punctuality to all lessons. Always ready and fully equipped for full participation in lessons. Work is always submitted on time and in an appropriate format. Folders show a very high degree of organization with all key documents immediately accessible and in a logical order
2	Good	Good punctuality – very rarely late. Almost always ready and equipped to take part fully in all activities. Folders are sensibly organized and key documents can be readily accessed
3	Requires Improvement	Occasionally late for lessons. Sometimes lacks key equipment necessary for full and active participation in all activities. Folders contain some but not all key documents and order does not facilitate easy access to key documents
4	Unacceptable	Often late for lessons. Frequently lacking in key equipment necessary to participate in activities. Folders absent or muddled. Little or no evidence of key documents being filed or in such random order that they are hard to access

### **Conclusion**

Your teachers are always available for consultation (although you may have to plan a meeting in advance because of their commitments to Neatherd and Northgate). Obviously if we are concerned about your work we will discuss this with you and may need to involve either Mrs Iwanczyk (Head of Year 12) or Mrs Meigh (Head of Year 13).

We hope that you find A Level Business Studies a lively and interesting subject.