

A Level Business Subject Overview

The Appleton School.

Review July 2023



Subject: A Level Business

Curriculum Intent (Covering Year 12 to 13)

The Business department at The Appleton School aims to develop young business students and knowledgeable entrepreneurs. The course at GCSE level aims for students to understand key business concepts, business terminology, business objectives, the integrated nature of business activity and the impact of business on individuals and wider society. The planned and specialised delivery of the specification gives students the opportunity to explore real life business issues and how businesses work enabling them to utilise this knowledge in their next steps.

The specification for Business studies is broad but covers these main functional areas: Business in the real world, Influences on business, Business operations, Human resources, Marketing and Finance.

With a combination of teacher led delivery, independent research, teamwork, competition and presentation activities we aim to complement the employability skills that they are developing in other subject areas as well as prepare students for the everyday world of working within or running an organisation.

Student Vision

- To experience awe and wonder gaining an enthusiasm and appreciation for the importance of business in student's lives
- To understand the perspectives of different groups when we apply our knowledge to real life
- To understand personal responsibilities for their own and businesses actions within society
- To gain lateral thinking skills, especially with regard to problem solving in different applied contexts.
- To practise essential business skills, which will be used throughout the student's lives.
- To understand the importance of sustainability; understanding the importance they can make by being responsible.

Aims linked to the curriculum

The vision and aims of A Level Business at the Appleton School has been influenced by the Edexcel Specification that we follow, which highlight areas that we feel particularly important in the 21st Century.

- Awe and wonder - "develop an enthusiasm for studying business" (Edexcel 2014)
- Perspectives – "understand that business behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives" (Edexcel 2014)
- Personal responsibilities - "develop a critical understanding of organisations and their ability to meet society's needs and wants" (Edexcel 2014)
- Lateral thinking - "generate enterprising and creative approaches to business opportunities, problems and issues" (Edexcel 2014)

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- Essential business skills - “acquire a range of relevant business and generic skills, including decision making, problem solving, the challenging of assumptions and critical analysis” (Edexcel 2014)
- Sustainability - “be aware of the ethical dilemmas and responsibilities faced by organisations and individuals” (Edexcel 2014)

How is the curriculum delivered?

The curriculum is divided into four separate themes. These themes are split evenly across Year 12 and Year 13, with students taking their knowledge of Theme 1 (marketing and people) and Theme 2 (managing business activities) and develop their knowledge of these in Theme 3 and Theme 4 (Business decisions and strategy & global business). Each theme is normally the responsibility of one classroom teacher, so the students learn both the year's themes simultaneously with separate teachers.

How is the curriculum assessed?

The curriculum is assessed throughout the course in a number of different ways. These range from informal assessment within the class, to more thorough, formal assessments. There is a large emphasis on understanding a quantity of different knowledge points and theories, and therefore key term tests make up a large part of informal assessment. Further to this, there is a large focus on quantitative skills within the course, as students are expected to be able to perform an array of calculations, therefore ongoing quantitative assessment also makes up a large part of informal testing.

Teachers are responsible for setting regular assessments. Within each theme there are a number of topics, at the end of each topic the students will have a topic assessment, which could take the form of exam-style questions or knowledge-based questions. Further to this, the class regularly use exam-style questions within the lesson to help develop their knowledge into the format of an exam answer.

All of these assessments lead towards formal assessment, in the form of mock examinations, which makes up the three formal exam weeks the students undertake each year.

How is the curriculum enriched (through speakers/visits/clubs) to generate a love of learning?

A large part of the course is devoted to linking business concepts to real-life examples. There created an enriched environment, as students' learning is consistently being applied to real-life, world examples. This is supplemented with teachers leading their learning by reflecting on their own practise within industry and encouraging learners to do the same. There are of course some learners without any experience of the workplace, and therefore there is time in the scheme of work given to allow students to research their own career paths and potential career routes. For instance, in theme 1, when teaching marketing, there are a number of careers that lead from this (such as a marketing manager) and students are given time to reflect on this and research potential careers.

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The Business Studies department is also closely linked with the school's enterprise department, and a number of students, even in A-Level, still get involved in the different enterprise programs being offered – ranging from practical experience of young enterprise, to school visits, for instance a Business trip to New York.

What skills and knowledge do students bring with them from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5?

A Level Business is a wide-ranging course, that develops from a plethora of different skills and knowledge, clearly the knowledge and skills gained from GCSE Business will support students' entry, however the skills listed below could be gained across the entire school curriculum:

- Analytical skills - these are imperative to be able to not only discuss business concepts within a class, but to break down theory within an exam answer.
- Application skills - which are a fundamental of business; being able to take the knowledge from learning and apply it within business context
- Literacy skills - which are used within exam answers, as most exam questions are essay-style questions
- Numeracy skills - which are important throughout the course; having the confidence to utilise business calculations and formulae.
- Debating skills - being able to argue what the correct course of action is, and to understand the different sides of a decision within a business scenario.

What will students study?

The A Level comprises of a two-year course, consisting of four separate ‘themes’. Two of these themes are focused on in the first year of study, with the other two themes taught in the second year. The second themes develop from the first year’s learning. Examination technique is a key part of the course, and although it is a focus within the second year, it is used throughout the course. *For further details on what the students will cover please see the A Level scheme of work.*

YR12

Term 1	Term 1	Term 2	Term 2	Term 3	Term 3
<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Topics 1.1 and 1.2 This introduces students to marketing, following through concepts such as what is marketing, how businesses conduct market research, and how they position themselves within a market. This is then developed with economic understanding, linking to elasticity of demand, income elasticity, and the impact of supply and demand.</p>	<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Topics 2.1 and 2.2 Here, students learn the fundamentals of finance, from the different sources of finance within a business, to how businesses plan their finances; covering areas such as business plans, sales forecasting, cash flow forecasting and another essential knowledge such as break even</p>	<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Topics 1.3 and 1.4 This continues marketing, focusing on how a business designs their products, and promote them. This follows into other areas of the marketing mix, such as pricing and distribution. Topic 1.4 focuses on how businesses themselves are organised, with regard to employees and organisational structures</p>	<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Topics 2.3 and 2.4 Students develop this knowledge with understanding of how businesses manage their finances and resources, understanding core elements such as profitability, liquidity and productivity.</p>	<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Topic 1.5 and exam preparation This looks at the different ways that businesses are structures and entrepreneurial motives. Focusing on entrepreneurs and forms of ownership. Further to this, students are given time to practise exam technique and develop this essential skill</p>	<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Topic 2.5 and exam preparation Students focus their knowledge on the external environment, understanding how the external environment impacts businesses, from economic factors, to social influences, as well as other external impacts. We also use this time to help students apply their knowledge to exam technique.</p>

YR13

Term 1	Term 1	Term 2	Term 2	Term 3	Term 3
<p>Theme 3 Topic 3.5 and 3.3 This term we focus on being able to break down finances into more complex decision making techniques. Students will be able to evaluate a company's financial performance using appropriate ratio analysis, and then making business decisions based on scientific approaches.</p>	<p>Theme 4 4.1 and 4.2 Students gain an introduction to globalisation; what it is, its benefits and challenges, and the different trade opportunities and barriers that faces globalising businesses. They take this further by looking at how businesses would decide which markets to grow into to produce or sell products.</p>	<p>Theme 3 Topics 3.1 and 3.2 This covers the challenges a business faces as they grow, from understanding influences of the external environment and the need to adjust strategy, to the different ways that businesses can grow (internally and externally).</p>	<p>Theme 4 Topics 4.3 and 4.4 These topics focus on more qualitative aspects of a globalised economy. For instance, looking at the ethical implications of globalising, and whether governments should control multi-national corporations. Further to this they look at the social and cultural issues and impacts of globalised economies.</p>	<p>Theme 3 Topics 3.4 and 3.6 Students take their previous knowledge and apply it to the impact that business decisions have on a business and the ways that businesses can overcome the adverse impacts of change, focusing on change management.</p>	<p>Theme 4 Students focus primarily on exam technique and applying their knowledge to an external scenario (as assessed by the exam board)</p>

Why has learning been sequenced in this way?

YR12		
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
<p>Topics 1.1 and 1.2</p> <p>Introducing with these topics help students understand the fundamentals of marketing which allow further understanding</p> <p>Topics 2.1 and 2.2</p> <p>These are the fundamentals of business finance, and so introducing these topics helps students access the course</p>	<p>Topics 1.3 and 1.4</p> <p>The marketing mix follows naturally from the fundamentals of marketing, taught in term 1</p> <p>Topics 2.3 and 2.4</p> <p>Once students understand the fundamentals of finance, knowing how they manage their resources is a natural progression</p>	<p>Topic 1.5</p> <p>This is a good way to round of learning for the year as once students understand businesses and marketing, they can apply their learning to different forms of business</p> <p>Topics 2.5</p> <p>By having prior knowledge of finance, and then learning external influences, it helps students analyse the impact of external influence on a business</p>
YR13		
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
<p>Topics 3.5 and 3.3</p> <p>These topics work well together as they are evaluating finances and calculations, which are a natural progression from students' year 12 course</p> <p>Topics 4.1 and 4.2</p> <p>Globalisation progresses naturally from year 12 learning which introduces these concepts, but this topic allows them to be analysed.</p>	<p>Topics 3.1 and 3.2</p> <p>Once students understand how to access business finances and viability, it allows students to work on this topic which focuses on different challenges businesses face as they grow</p> <p>Topics 4.3 and 4.4</p> <p>Once students have the understanding of globalised businesses, they can then apply this knowledge to the impacts of globalised business and the ethical issues concerning this.</p>	<p>Topics 3.4 and 3.6</p> <p>Students' prior knowledge of growing business develops well into this topic which focuses on overcoming issues with growth</p> <p>Exam preparation and scenario focus</p> <p>Students must have an understanding of all the previous topics to be able to access the content of the external case study</p>

What cross-curricular themes have been identified?

A Level Business is a course that relies upon a wide knowledge and skills-base, and therefore is naturally a cross-curricular subject; from literacy, to numeracy, to exploring theories and hypothesise, it uses a number of skills. Some of the main areas that business links with are English, Mathematics and Economics. Clear literacy and writing skills are fundamental to answering exam questions, Mathematics is used throughout the quantitative elements of the course, which are significant, whether this is simple calculations or interpreting and analysing data. Economics has clear links as there are cross-over topics, although they are taught to a higher level in economics, for instance learning about the external environment, elasticity, supply and demand, or other economic factors such as interest rates and exchange rates. Below are some examples where these links are within the course:

Term 1	Business builds on the skills used across a number of topics as it is a diverse course, however here are some examples. Clear links with economics - for instance through teaching of supply and demand. Furthermore, clear numeracy skills used, for instance with ratio analysis and calculations.
Term 2	Numeracy is important, for instance through topics taught in theme 2. Psychology is also linked well, an example being the motivations of employees.
Term 3	Again, psychology is used when linking entrepreneurial motivation. Furthermore, topics such as sociology are used in the impacts of external influences.

How will this be assessed to show that students have learnt and remembered what they have been taught?

There are various assessments throughout the course, from regular mini assessments within the class, to practise exam questions, to more formal assessments. Below are the formal assessments.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Module tests	Module tests	Module tests
Mock exam week	Mock exam week	Mock exam week and final exams

What will students be expected to know and remember?

For an in-depth view on what the students will be expected to know and remember in regards to knowledge and skills please see the A Level Business Studies scheme of work.