

## Proposed Changes to WJEC AS and A Level Business

### Introduction

WJEC are consulting on proposed changes to AS and A Level Business following a targeted review. The review aims to modernise content, improve manageability, and ensure successful progression from GCSE, while avoiding wholesale reform.

### Why is this review taking place?

In June 2023, Qualifications Wales published approval criteria for new GCSEs and Level 2 qualifications. As part of this process, WJEC was asked to review existing AS and A levels to ensure alignment with reformed GCSEs and continued relevance. Business was identified as one of the subjects requiring the highest level of review.

### Overall approach

This is a targeted review rather than a full reform. The qualification structure remains unchanged. Most content is retained, with refinements focusing on relevance, depth, and manageability.

### What is staying the same?

Key aspects of the qualification will remain unchanged to ensure continuity for centres and learners:

- Qualification structure
- Unit sub-titles
- Majority of existing content

### What is proposed?

Non-essential, standalone or outdated content will be removed. Content will be repositioned where appropriate, and new material has been added to reflect developments in technology, ethics, sustainability, diversity and society.

Changes are proposed for Units 1 and 2 for first teaching in 2027, and Units 3 and 4 for first teaching in 2028.

## Summary of changes by unit – (areas in bold are sections of the current qualification)

Unit 1: Streamlining content to reduce overlap and strengthening the focus on stakeholders.

Areas Removed	Areas Added/Updated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Business plans</b></li><li>• <b>Sampling</b></li><li>• avoiding bias in market research</li><li>• the roles of the public and private sectors in the provision of goods and services</li><li>• direct, indirect/overhead costs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how conflict can occur between different stakeholders</li></ul>

Unit 2: Reducing excessive breadth, updating management and workplace practices.

Areas Removed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the purpose of marketing and its importance to different types of business organisation in different situations</li> <li>• what is meant by market orientation, product orientation and asset-led marketing</li> <li>• the relationship between the product life cycle and cash flow</li> <li>• contribution strategy</li> <li>• the role of the finance department</li> <li>• the benefits and limitations of cash flow forecasts</li> <li>• the functions of the human resource department</li> <li>• what is meant by the recruitment process</li> <li>• what is meant by job analysis, job description and person specification</li> <li>• <b>Appraisal</b></li> <li>• matrix structures</li> <li>• the advantages and disadvantages of changing organisational structures and delayering</li> <li>• the choice between empowerment and control of the workforce</li> <li>• E. Mayo (human relations), V. Vroom, L. Porter and E. Lawler (expectancy theories)</li> <li>• the relevance of motivational theories and their importance to businesses</li> <li>• consultation and job design methods of motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is meant by management</li> <li>• the functions and roles of management</li> <li>• the advantages and disadvantages of management by objectives (MBO)</li> <li>• the importance of management to a business and its stakeholders</li> <li>• the leadership theories including F. Fiedler (1976) and P. Wright and D. Taylor (1984 )</li> <li>• the resolution of disputes including negotiation, consultation and the role of ACAS</li> <li>• <b>Operations Management</b></li> <li>• the importance of added value to a business and its Stakeholders</li> <li>• <b>Production</b></li> <li>• cell production and time-based management</li> <li>• the difference between quality control and quality assurance</li> <li>• quality chains, empowerment, monitoring, teamwork, quality circles and benchmarking</li> <li>• methods of stock control including traditional stock control methods, just-in-time and computerised stock control</li> <li>• interpret stock control diagrams and explain the main components including re-order level, lead time, buffer stock and minimum stock level</li> <li>• the process of product design and development</li> </ul>
Areas Added/Updated	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hybrid working</li> <li>• Tannenbaum and Schmidt continuum theory</li> <li>• what is meant by employee participation</li> <li>• how to improve employer/employee relations</li> <li>• customer focus, employee involvement, continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• role of procurement, logistics and stock control stages of the supply chain</li> <li>• importance of having an effective supply chain</li> <li>• ethical and environmental considerations of managing the supply chain</li> </ul>

Unit 3: Removing abstract strategic models and strengthening applied, contemporary business analysis.

#### Areas Removed

- accounts can be affected by window-dressing and other factors, such as changes in demand and inflation
- the role of vision statements and their relationship to a business' aims
- what is meant by SMART objectives
- vision statements, objectives and mission statements and their impact on a business and its stakeholders
- divisional strategy
- the usefulness of the Ansoff matrix to businesses
- the factors that affect decisions about location/relocation and rationalisation
- the importance of decision-making to a business
- the nature and purpose of cost benefit analysis (CBA), commenting on the benefits and limitations of the technique
- carry out cost benefit analysis, interpret and evaluate the results
- **Special orders**

#### Areas Added/Updated

- the reasons why businesses grow or retrench
- cash flow problems, overborrowing and overtrading
- AI and business management software

Unit 4: Modernising content to reflect the increasing importance of managing change, understanding the global economic environment, and responding to social, technological and environmental challenges.

#### Areas Removed

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the causes of change in business including a change in the size of the business, a change in ownership, developments in technology, market changes, consumer tastes, legislation, changes in the workforce and changes in the economy</li> <li>• J. Storey's four different approaches</li> <li>• Lewin's three step process, changes in organizational culture and the role of leadership</li> <li>• how the management of change can be evaluated</li> <li>• some risks are more certain to happen than others and that this will affect the decision as to how much a business will be willing to spend on their prevention</li> <li>• how some risks can be dealt with by preventative actions such as installing water sprinklers, backing up IT data and training employees</li> <li>• the difference between insurable and uninsurable risks</li> <li>• the possible responses of a business to the potential risks that it faces</li> <li>• the role of the government in providing a stable framework in which businesses operate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the importance of the government as a purchaser of goods and services from the private sector</li> <li>• the business cycle and their measurement (GDP)</li> <li>• the measurement of inflation</li> <li>• the impact of the business cycle</li> <li>• company law</li> <li>• intellectual property</li> <li>• developing markets</li> <li>• how businesses adapt their products, marketing activities and working practices to reflect the local needs (glocalisation)</li> <li>• the reasons for the existence of multinational companies</li> <li>• the decision of a business to operate as a multinational company</li> <li>• the nature and purpose of the European Union (EU) and the single European market</li> <li>• the impact of the EU on businesses and their stakeholders</li> <li>• what is meant by the single European currency (the euro) and the Eurozone</li> <li>• the costs and benefits of the single European currency to businesses and their stakeholders</li> <li>• the impact to UK businesses of being a member of the EU and the Eurozone</li> </ul> |
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## Areas Added/Updated

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategies for managing change including leadership, communication, transparency, employee engagement, training and support, positive culture and monitoring</li> <li>• Kotter and Schlesinger's six ways of overcoming resistance to change</li> <li>• the main areas of government spending</li> <li>• recession</li> <li>• how the economic environment is dynamic within the UK and globally</li> <li>• interpret economic data</li> <li>• the diverse and dynamic nature of society</li> <li>• diversity, media influence and reducing inequalities</li> <li>• how businesses and society influence each other</li> <li>• what is meant by the digital revolution, automation, robotics, Fintech, e-commerce, m-commerce, social media, stock management systems and cloud storage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a range of recent technological developments that can be used to support businesses</li> <li>• diversity, discrimination transparency and accountability and executive pay</li> <li>• how society, ethical, legal and political factors influence business behaviour towards the environment</li> <li>• the three pillars of sustainability</li> <li>• what is meant by the environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework</li> <li>• the use of the ESG standards by businesses to manage sustainability, social and ethical practices</li> <li>• the benefits to a business of using an ESG approach</li> <li>• what is meant by offshoring and reshoring</li> <li>• what is meant by deglobalisation</li> <li>• what factors have led to increased deglobalisation</li> </ul> |
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### Intended benefits

The revised specification aims to enhance relevance, manageability, assessment validity, and learner engagement, while supporting progression to higher education and employment.

### How to respond

Stakeholders are invited to comment on the overall approach, the proposed unit-level changes, and any potential benefits or concerns. Feedback will inform final decisions before approval. After reading this proposal, please respond to the survey here by 27.05.26.