

GCSE Business Qualification Outline – Consultation Version



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Introduction

This document provides a high-level overview of the proposed WJEC GCSE Business Qualification.

It is based on Qualifications Wales's Approval Criteria (key sections are included in Appendix 1). Our qualification **must** meet these requirements.

The qualification outline will provide a guide for the development of the Specification and Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs).

Qualification Overview

The GCSE Business qualification will support the Curriculum for Wales by:

- Supporting the statements of what matters¹ by giving learners the opportunity to:
 - gain a deeper understanding of the concepts underpinning humanities, and their application in local, national and global contexts
 - helping learners gather, justify, present, analyse, and evaluate a range of evidence
 - explore how and why interpretations may differ and by critical understanding of a range of interpretations and representations derived from a variety of evidence
 - understanding and appreciating how and why places in their locality and elsewhere in Wales, as well as in the wider world, are changing
 - understand, as producers and consumers, their own impact on the natural world
 - develop their own identity and an awareness of how they, as individuals, can shape the communities in which they live
 - heighten learners' awareness of how the future sustainability of our world and climate change is influenced by the impact of those actions
 - appreciate how the evolution of places, communities and societies is driven by the interplay between a range of factors, including environmental, economic, social, political and cultural processes and human actions
 - develop an understanding of their responsibilities as citizens of Wales and the wider interconnected world
 - encourage learners to develop as self-aware, informed, ethical global citizens, who critically reflect on their own and others' beliefs, values and attitudes.

- Supporting the principles of progression² by encouraging learners to:
 - ask increasingly sophisticated enquiry questions
 - demonstrate greater independence in finding suitable information, making informed predictions and hypotheses, and making judgements
 - increase their breadth and depth of knowledge and underlying concepts
 - develop an understanding of themselves in the world
 - demonstrate an ability to work with an increasing number and sophistication of sources of information, and a growing understanding of how to resolve contradictory or conflicting accounts
 - demonstrate a growing ability to transfer existing skills and knowledge into new, and increasingly unfamiliar contexts.

¹ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/statements-of-what-matters/>

² <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/principles-of-progression/>

- Supporting the subject specific considerations for Business³ by:
 - developing an understanding of business and its value to individuals, society and the Welsh, national and global economy
 - enabling learners to appreciate that the environment in which business takes place is constantly changing
 - appreciating the impact of business on people's lives and the environment
 - examining ways in which businesses succeed or fail and the strategies required for success
 - developing an understanding of the contribution that business has in shaping the prosperity of communities and thereby people's prospects for the future
 - exploring business creation through enterprise and entrepreneurship
- developing skills to empower business problem solving and decision making.

The GCSE Business qualification will also be based on the following concepts:

- business and society
- business fundamentals
- business strategies for success
- change
- cynefin
- economies
- enquiry and investigation
- enterprise/ entrepreneurship
- ethics
- innovation
- opportunities and challenges
- sustainability.

Proposed Qualification Structure

Unit 1: Introduction to the Business World

Written examination

30% of qualification

Unit 2: Key Business Themes

Non-examination assessment

15% of qualification

Set and marked by WJEC

Unit 3: Business Decision-making

Written examination

30% of qualification

Unit 4: Business Creation

Non-examination assessment

25% of qualification

Set by WJEC, marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC

This will be a unitised qualification.

³ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/designing-your-curriculum/#specific-considerations-for-this-area>

Aside from Unit 1, which is an introductory unit, there is no hierarchy implied by the order in which the three other units are presented. Therefore, the order does not imply a prescribed teaching order.

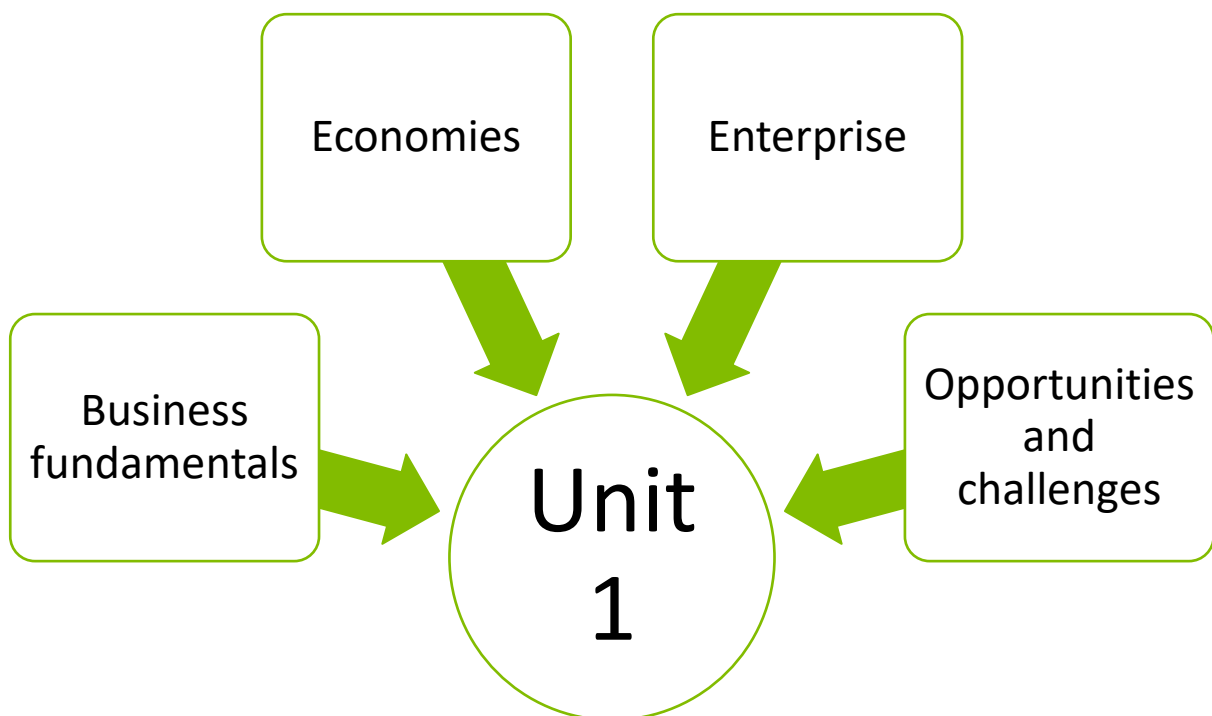
Unit Information

Unit 1 – Introduction to the Business World

The purpose of this unit is to:

- introduce learners to the key concepts to be explored throughout the course
- introduce learners to skills
- introduce the business world and build up knowledge to allow for meaningful analysis and investigation of the themes that follow.

This unit will be based on the following concepts:



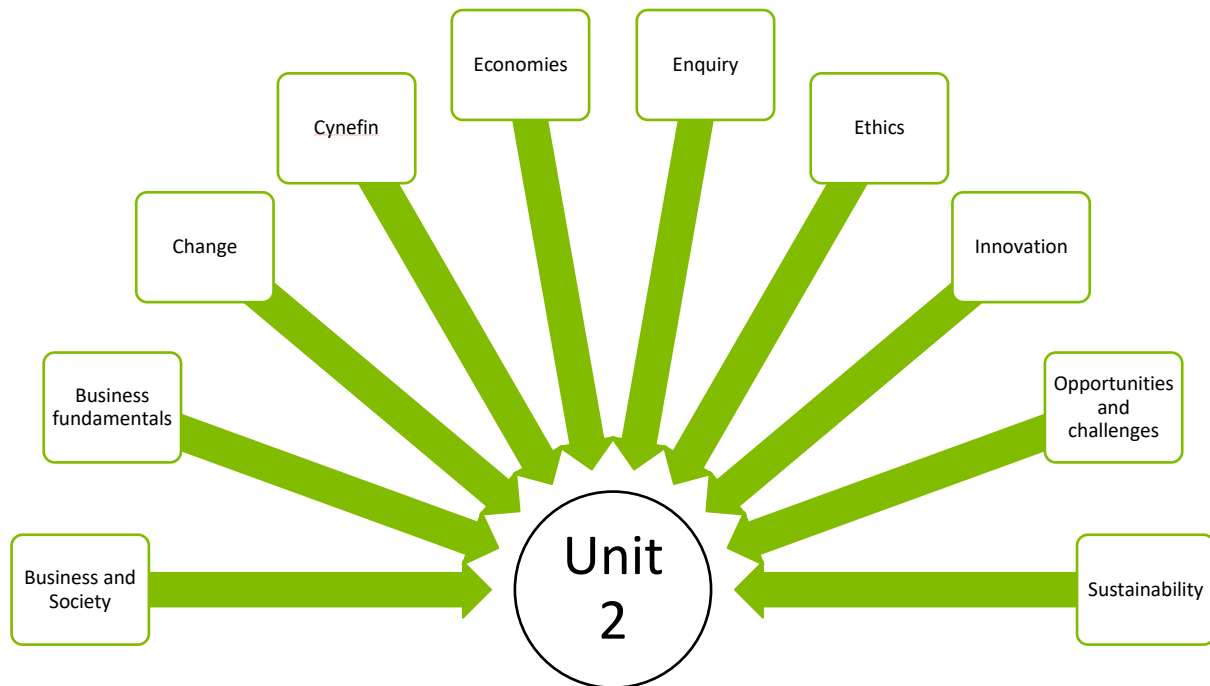
The unit will be assessed via an examination available in the summer series with a mix of question types that will target AO1, AO2 and AO3. An examination will be made available for the first cohort in summer 2026. It is likely that AO1 will have the highest weighting, followed by AO2 and AO3. The duration of the examination is likely to be approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. There will be no optionality in this unit.

Unit 2 – Key Business Themes

The purpose of this unit is to:

- allow learners to apply what they have learned in Unit 1 to a range of themes from the Approval Criteria and the Curriculum for Wales.

This unit will be based on the following concepts :



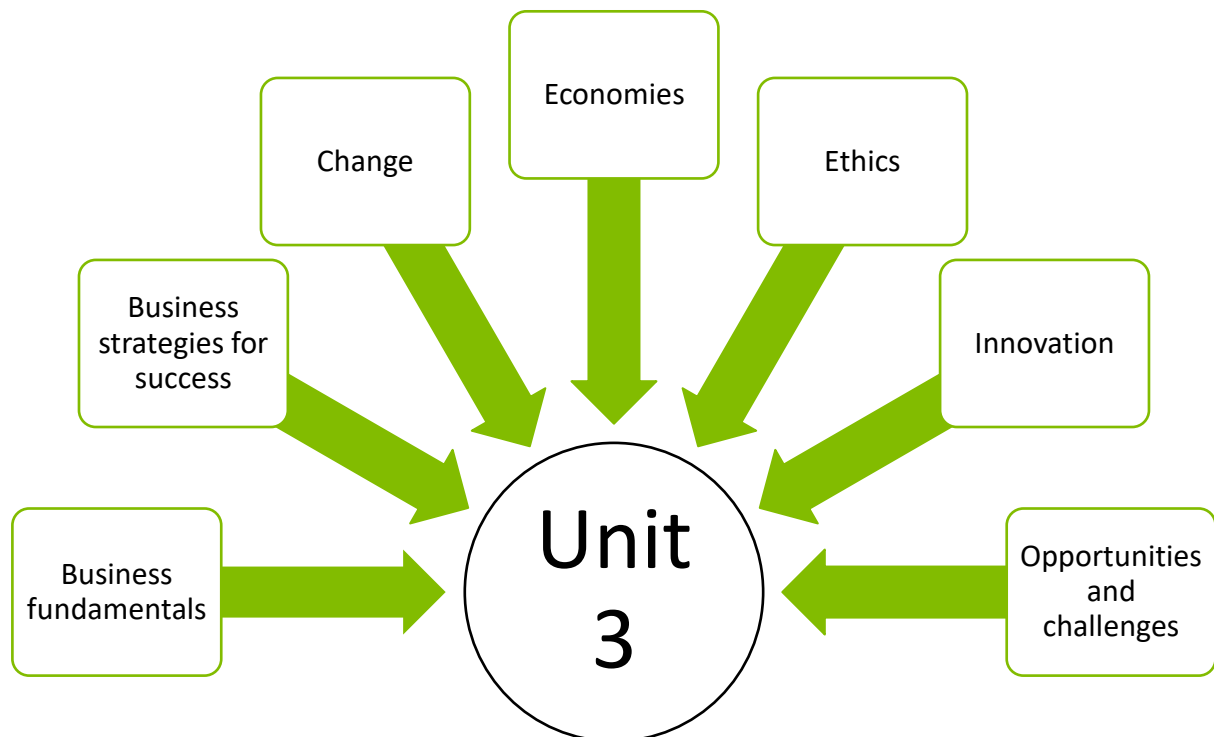
The unit will take the form of non-examination assessment available in the summer series, first available in 2026, with a mix of tasks that will target AO2, AO3 and AO4. Due to the practical nature of the investigation, AO4 is likely to receive the highest weighting, followed by AO3 (due to the investigative skills) and then AO2. The non-examination assessment will involve learners investigating a business in their locality (this could be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) or a national business that exists in their locality). It will feature tasks based on two themes from the unit content (such as sustainability, ethics or the changing workplace), which will be set by WJEC each year. Centres will be able to choose from these themes. The non-examination assessment will be set and marked by WJEC. The assessment must be submitted digitally. The undertaking of the research into the business is likely to feature a low level of control to enable learners to undertake an authentic enquiry experience. However, assessed tasks are likely to be taken under a high level of control. The time allowed for the assessment will be approximately four hours (two hours for investigation and two hours to respond to assessment tasks).

Unit 3 – Business Decision-making

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **develop greater critical thinking**
- **develop learner understanding of the critical issues facing business and ways in which these can be solved.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts :



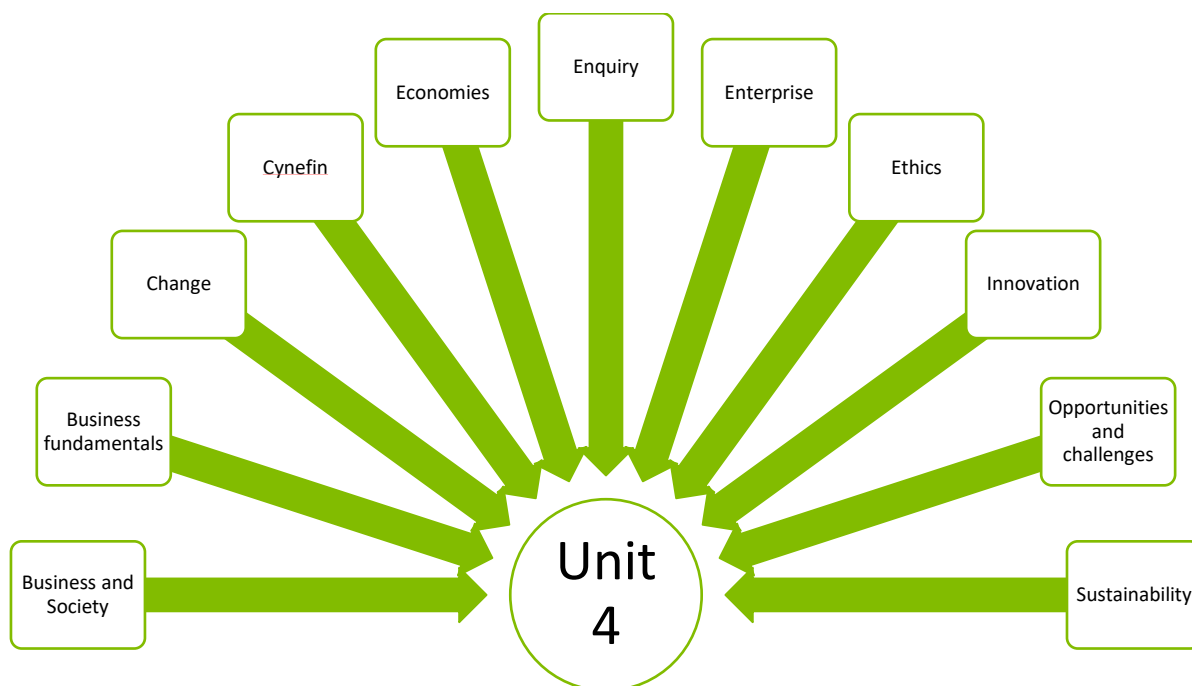
The unit will be assessed via an examination available in the summer series, with a mix of question types that will target AO1, AO2 and AO3. As this unit has a focus on critical thinking, AO3 is likely to have the higher weighting in this paper with AO1 and AO2 having similar weightings. The duration of the examination is likely to be approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. There will be no optionality in this unit.

Unit 4 – Business Creation

The purpose of this unit is to:

- **allow learners to consider a wide range of business concepts and themes**
- **allow learners to consider how businesses are created.**

This unit will be based on the following concepts:



The unit will take the form of non-examination assessment available in the summer series, with a mix of tasks that will target AO2, AO3 and AO4. Due to the practical nature of the investigation, AO4 is likely to receive the highest weighting, followed by AO3 (due to the investigative skills) and AO2. There will be no optionality in this unit. The non-examination assessment will feature an assessment based around setting up a new business to meet a need in the learner's locality (this could be societal, environmental or economic). Learners will identify and justify the need, allowing for learner choice. The non-examination assessment will be marked by centres and moderated by WJEC. The undertaking of the research is likely to feature a low level of control to enable learners to undertake an authentic enquiry experience. However, assessed tasks are likely to be taken under a high level of control. The assessment must be submitted digitally. The time allowed for the assessment will be approximately six hours (three hours for investigation and three hours to respond to tasks).

Consideration of manageability, engagement, validity and reliability

In developing this proposed qualification outline, we have considered manageability, engagement, validity and reliability, and how to balance these considerations in the context of the requirements of the Approval Criteria.

The Approval Criteria require 40% of the qualification to be assessed by non-examination assessment; one non-examination assessment must be set by WJEC, internally marked by the school, and moderated by WJEC, and the other will must be set and marked by WJEC.

This poses some potential manageability challenges which we propose to minimise by allowing centres to spread the workload and assessment. As the Approval Criteria state that the qualification is unitised, we propose making both non-examination assessment in the summer terms of both first and second year of teaching to give centre some choice in deciding when to undertake the non-examination assessments. We have also considered the assessment time that we have allocated to both non-examination assessments to try to

reduce the impact on teaching and learning. Both non-examination assessments will feature tasks that require practical enquiry (researching a business and investigating a business need in the locality). To aid manageability we would foresee these featuring a low level of control to enable learners to undertake an authentic enquiry experience. However, in order to ensure reliability, we will provide guidance on what notes are able to be used from the practical enquiry when responding to the assessment tasks. When undertaking the assessed tasks, we have concluded that a high level of control is considered crucial to assure reliability. This will secure the requirement of the Approval Criteria that learners can demonstrate a range of appropriate enquiry and investigation skills including the ability to think critically and the ability to reflect.

We believe that our proposed qualification should provide opportunities for centres to develop an engaging programme of study for its learners, in line with the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales. Unit 1 will cover a broad introduction to the business world, allowing for a range of topics to be covered, and will allow learners to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts underpinning business, and their application in Welsh, national and global contexts. Unit 2 will enable learners to engage with key business themes by exploring data in the context of businesses and business sectors. This will provide learners with a real-world context to their learning. Unit 3 will explore real life decisions made by businesses on a daily basis. This will enable learners to appreciate that the environment in which business takes place is constantly changing, as well as examining ways in which businesses succeed or fail and the strategies required for success. Unit 4 will engage learners by exploring business creation through enterprise and entrepreneurship, as well as exploring the relationship between business and society. The unit will encourage learners to consider the potential positive impact that new businesses can have on local communities.

We believe that the non-examination assessments we proposed for Units 2 and 4 are a valid approach to assessing the purpose and content because they allow learners to demonstrate their skills in appropriate contexts. To ensure the reliability of the non-examination assessments, we will ensure each unit will target the same assessment objective weightings each series. For both units, marking criteria will be developed and for Unit 4, teachers will be provided with a package of support to ensure consistent application of the marking criteria across centres and over time. We will moderate a sample of candidate work from each centre to provide further assurance of reliability.

We believe that the purpose and content of Units 1 and 3 can be validly assessed by examination, and a mix of question types can help us maximise validity. When we develop assessments, we will ensure that all tasks target the relevant construct, that there is an appropriate balance of content covered over time and that there is alignment between assessment items and learning outcomes. Where appropriate, we will use data available to us on how an assessment has functioned. To ensure reliability, we will make sure that the examined units target the same assessment objective weightings and have a consistent level of demand each series, marking criteria will be developed and assessors will be trained on how to apply them consistently.

We will continue to consider the balance of manageability, engagement, reliability and validity, at each stage of qualification development.

APPENDIX

Key information from Approval Criteria

The following information has come directly from Qualifications Wales's [GCSE Business - Approval Criteria](#) - our qualification must meet these requirements.

Purpose

1. **GCSE Business** must:
 - 1.1 be designed primarily for *Learners* between the ages of 14 and 16
 - 1.2 build on the conceptual understanding *Learners* have developed through their learning from ages 3-14
 - 1.3 support teaching and learning by providing appropriately broad, demanding, relevant and engaging content and assessment that relates to and supports the Curriculum for Wales, including its [four purposes](#)
 - 1.4 allow *Learners* to develop a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding which supports progression to post-16 study and prepares them for life, learning and work
 - 1.5 provide meaningful, fair and accurate information on *Learner* achievement within a subject that highlights what *Learners* know, understand and can do

Aims

2. **GCSE Business** must:
 - 2.1. allow *Learners* to explore a range of knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to business
 - 2.2. provide opportunities for *Learners* to be assessed in a variety of relevant and meaningful contexts
3. The **GCSE Business** qualification must support *Learners* to develop:
 - 3.1. an understanding of the activities that make a business successful
 - 3.2. an appreciation of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of society by understanding the role and influence of business and innovation on people, places, and community
 - 3.3. an understanding of business processes, incentives, and outcomes, within their *cynefin*, and how these can influence opportunities for prosperity
 - 3.4. an understanding of the relationship between business and the environment
 - 3.5. an understanding of technology and its impact on business, the environment, and people
 - 3.6. an understanding of the ethical implications of a business

Assessment Objectives

- The assessment of the knowledge, understanding and skills required in the qualification must target the following assessment objectives in line with the indicated weightings, within a tolerance of +/- 5 percentage points.

AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of business terms, concepts, and theories	25%
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AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding of business terms, concepts, and theories to different contexts	25%
AO3	Analyse, evaluate, or make judgements on business issues using business concepts, theories, and business data	25%
AO4	Select, use and apply skills and techniques in practice to undertake enquiries relevant to business	25%

Scheme of assessment

- The **GCSE Business** qualification must be unitised.
- The qualification will not be tiered.

The **GCSE Business** specification must include the following assessment arrangements:

11.1. two examination assessments that:

- 11.1.1. are set and marked by the awarding body
- 11.1.2. account for 60% of the qualification

12. The timing of the examinations must be prescribed by the awarding body.

13. One exam unit must be available in the summer of 2026 for the first cohort of Learners taking the qualification.

14. There must be two non-examination assessments that account for 40% of the qualification:

- 14.1. one non-examination assessment set by the awarding body, internally marked by the school, and externally moderated by the awarding body
- 14.2. one non-examination assessment set and externally marked by the awarding body both of which must be able to be submitted digitally