

Qualification objective

The ABE Level 3 Diploma in Business Management (QCF) is designed to give learners a solid grounding in the fundamentals of business, enabling them to progress either to employment in a business role, or to further/higher education.

Learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of what a business is and how the different functions within it interact. They will learn how to undertake core business activities such as finance, communication, research and analysis, and using IT in a business context. They will also be introduced to the key theories and principles which underpin business management, and how these can be applied to real life scenarios.

Qualification recognition

The ABE Level 3 Diploma in Business Management (QCF) is approved on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and is regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Exams Regulation (Ofqual). The qualification number is 601/3485/9. This qualification is supported by Skills CfA, the Standard Setting Body for business skills in the UK.

Qualification structure

This qualification consists of five mandatory units, each worth 9 QCF credits. Learners must achieve all these units, totalling 45 credits, in order to gain the qualification. The units within this qualification are:

Unit reference no. (URN)	ABE unit ref	Unit title	Credit value
R/506/4448	3UOC	Understanding the organisational context of business	9
K/506/4455	3UBI	Understanding and using business information	9
Y/506/4449	3UBC	Understanding and using business communication	9
A/506/4458	3UBF	Understanding business finance	9
J/506/4463	3UIT	Understanding and using IT for business	9

Progression opportunities

Learners who have successfully completed this level 3 qualification meet the entry criteria for the following ABE level 4 qualifications:

Qualification number	Qualification Title
500/8792/7	Level 4 Diploma in Business Management (QCF) (<i>includes Financial Management and Management of Information Systems pathways</i>)
600/8082/6	Level 4 Diploma in Business Start-Up and Entrepreneurship (QCF)
500/9614/X	Level 4 Diploma in Human Resource Management (QCF)
500/9773/8	Level 4 Diploma in Marketing Management (QCF)
500/9911/5	Level 4 Diploma in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management (QCF)

More details of all ABE level 4 qualifications can be found on the ABE website: www.abeuk.com.

ABE has progression agreements with over 80 Universities worldwide, providing a cost-effective route to a Bachelors or Masters degree. Learners who complete an ABE level 4 qualification may choose to take advantage of this option to begin a University degree, or they may continue to study higher level ABE qualifications which provide access to the second or final year of a Bachelors degree.

Unit title: Understanding the organisational context of business

ABE unit code: 3UOC

Unit Reference Number: R/506/4448

Unit level: QCF Level 3

Credit value: 9 credits

Guided learning hours: 28

Unit review date: 31 August 2016

Purpose and aim of unit:

This unit will enable learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of the different types of organisation, and their core business and operating environments. They will learn about the functions commonly found in organisations to support the business and how these functions combine to enhance business performance. Learners will also be introduced to tools used to analyse the internal and external factors impacting on the business.

This unit is suitable for persons who are seeking to:

- develop a career in business
- develop their knowledge, skills and competence in business studies
- further develop their knowledge and understanding of different organisations and their business and operational context.

Assessment method:

This unit will be assessed by a written examination, which will be set and marked by ABE.

Unit content:

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will...</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can...</i>
1. Understand the different types of organisation and their business aims	1.1 Compare the aims and goals of different types of organisation 1.2 Identify the products, services and customers of different business organisations
2. Understand different types of organisational structures	2.1 Describe the key characteristics of large and small/medium enterprises 2.2 Assess the role of different functions within businesses and their inter-relationships
3. Know how to assess an organisation's competitive position	3.1 Use an analysis tool to identify the factors which might impact on an organisation's competitive position 3.2 Recommend a course of action to improve an aspect of business performance

Indicative content:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the different types of organisation and their

business aims

Aims and goals

Public, private and not for profit; contemporary issues, e.g. green issues, ethics, CSR; vision, mission and value statements.

Types of organisation

Multi-nationals; large, small and medium enterprises; private; governmental; military; voluntary; entrepreneurial enterprises; manufacturing & services, e.g. health & beauty, financial, retail, domestic, electronic, legal etc.; forms of ownership, e.g. sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, charities.

Products, Services and Customers

Business to business; business to customer; customer to business; business to administration; customer to customer.

Learning Outcome 2: Understand different types of organisational structures

Key characteristics

Structural characteristics, e.g. functional, divisional, matrix, network and virtual organisations; roles and responsibilities, e.g. director, senior management, quality control and auditors etc.

Functions

Major functional areas in business and their contribution: R&D; IT; manufacturing; production and operations; marketing; sales; distribution and customer support; finance and accounting; human resources; business services.

Cross-functional business activities and integration of the various functions to enhance business performance.

Learning Outcome 3: Know how to assess an organisation's competitive position

Analysis Tools

Internal and external tools for analysing the business environment, including: SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis; PEST (political, economic, social, technological) analysis; Porter's 5 Forces model.

Course of Action

Consider business environment; macro and micro factors; competitive edge; cost; quality; time; flexibility; technology.

Suggested reading:

- Foundations of Business (3rd edition) by W.M. Pride, R.J. Hughes, and J.R. Kapoor (2012). ISBN-13: 978-1111580155.
- Business in Action (6th edition) by C.V. Bovée and J.V. Thill (2013). ISBN-13: 9780132828789.
- Introduction to Business (5th edition) by J. Madura (2010). ISBN-13: 978-0763836207.
- Business in Context: An Introduction to Business and Its Environment (4th edition) by D. Needle (2004). ISBN-13: 978-1861529923.
- Introduction to Business (1st edition) by J. Gaspar, L. Bierman, J. Kolari, R. Hise, and L. Murphy-Smith (2006). ISBN-13: 978-0618306367.

3UBI Understanding and using business information

Unit title: Understanding and using business information

ABE unit code: 3UBI

Unit Reference Number: K/506/4455

Unit level: QCF Level 3

Credit value: 9 Credits

Guided learning hours: 28

Unit review date: 31 August 2016

Purpose and aim of unit:

This unit will enable learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of the different types and uses of information within the business context. Knowledge about, and skills in, the process of research will be developed, as well as how to utilise research findings to inform decision-making in the business.

This unit is suitable for persons who are seeking to:

- develop a career in business
- develop their knowledge, skills and competence in business studies
- further develop their knowledge and skills in understanding and using information within a business context, along with the essential tools for systematic enquiry.

Assessment method:

This unit will be assessed by a written examination, which will be set and marked by ABE.

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>
1. Understand the different types and sources of information used within the business context	1.1 Describe different types of information used by organisations to support business decision-making 1.2 Evaluate the usefulness of different sources of business information
2. Know how to conduct research into an aspect of the business	2.1 Determine the information required to investigate an aspect of the business 2.2 Prepare a research plan to gather the information required
3. Know how to utilise business research findings	3.1 Analyse and interpret the research findings 3.2 Prepare a report on the investigation to inform key stakeholders

Indicative content:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the different types and sources of information used within the business context

Types of information

Internal examples: information about core services, products and customer base; customer demand; employee skill-mix; financial records, e.g. costs, sales income; suppliers; inventory/stock; assets; policies and procedures.

External examples: industry information; competitors; government policies; legal and regulatory information; relevant industry/market research.

Sources of business information

Primary and secondary data; qualitative and quantitative data including government and market data sources; use of the internet. Issues of accuracy and reliability.

Consider sufficiency; accessibility; currency.

Learning Outcome 2: Know how to conduct research into an aspect of the business

Information Required

Identification of purpose and objectives of investigation; self-determined or required by internal/external client or customer; use and possible outcomes; formal/informal investigation; timelines and schedule for completion; budget.

The topic for investigation could (for example) relate to:

- Marketing research
- Quality processes
- Response to change in government regulation
- Monthly reports

Types and sources of information to be collected to meet the specific brief requirements including internal/external information, regular updated information e.g. monthly data collection, information for a specific project; limitations including currency, relevance, accessibility, accuracy and completeness of available data sources.

Research Plan

Planning a research project may include: data collection design; research methods/tools for primary and secondary data collection, e.g. published reports, online and manual surveys, focus groups; sampling frames and methods; scheduling and activity scheduling tools, e.g. Gantt charts; control methods to meet brief, e.g. targets/milestones.

Learning Outcome 3: Know how to utilise business research findings

Research Findings

Methods to analyse data from various sources (primary and secondary data); tools to facilitate analysis, e.g. spreadsheets; interpretation of data; benchmarking; contradictions and limitations.

Report

Consider format and presentation methods; readership levels (stakeholders); conclusions, including key findings, assumptions and limitations; recommendations for further research or actions.

Suggested reading:

- Business Essentials: Business Decision Making Course Book by M. Hinton (2013). ISBN-13: 978-1445368238.
- Introducing Information Management: The Business Approach by M. Hinton (2005). ISBN-13: 978-0750666688.
- BBC Bitesize, BBC website. Available from:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/business_management/business_enterprise/business_information_ict/revision/1/.

Unit title: Understanding and using business communication

ABE unit code: 3UBC

Unit Reference Number: Y/506/4449

Unit level: QCF Level 3

Credit value: 9 credits

Guided learning hours: 28

Unit review date: 31 August 2016

Purpose and aim of unit:

This unit focuses on the essentials of good communication and the key role that these play in order for a business to operate effectively. The learner will explore a range of different communication methods and learn how to address barriers to communication.

This unit is suitable for persons who are seeking to:

- develop a career in business
- develop their knowledge, skills and competence in business studies
- further develop their knowledge and skills in communicating and building effective relationships within a business context.

Assessment method:

This unit will be assessed by a written examination, which will be set and marked by ABE.

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>
1. Understand different communication methods and styles used in effective business communication	1.1 Determine suitable communication methods and styles for different tasks within the business context 1.2 Explain the importance of adapting communication methods and styles to different audiences
2. Know barriers to effective communication and methods to resolve them	2.1 Explain barriers to communication 2.2 Explain different techniques that could be used to address barriers to communication
3. Know how to communicate effectively in a business context	3.1 Demonstrate suitable communication methods for different business tasks 3.2 Explain ways to improve personal and interpersonal communication skills

Indicative content:

Note: 'Methods and Styles' will refer to British business practice.

Learning Outcome 1: Understand different communication methods and styles used in effective business communication

Communication methods and styles

Methods include:

- Verbal, e.g. presentations, group conversations – team meetings, projects etc. – one to one meetings, telephone conversations.
- Non-verbal, e.g. body language, personal appearance, active listening.
- Written, e.g. reports, presentation slides, agendas, minutes, email, letters, posters, print advertisements, note-taking, customer satisfaction surveys and market research.
- Media advertisements, e.g. television and radio; podcasts; social media.

Styles include:

- Formal or informal.
- Internal (colleagues) or external (suppliers, customers etc.).
- Showing audience awareness.

Learning Outcome 2: Know barriers to effective communication and methods to resolve them

Barriers

Barriers include:

- Verbal, e.g. language, ability to move discussion forward.
- Non-verbal, e.g. body language, attitude, time management, lack of understanding/misunderstanding, cultural references, emotions, conflict (conflict of character or agenda), bias, grievance.
- Environment, e.g. noise, insufficient information, chain of command.

Techniques

Techniques to resolve barriers include: mediation, one to one, improved clarity, active listening, cultural awareness, audience awareness, respect, de-escalation.

Examples of Communication models: Shannon's, Berlo's and Schramm's.

Learning Outcome 3: Know how to communicate effectively in a business context

Ways to improve

Identifying strengths and weaknesses; active listening; reflection; checking understanding; time management; delegation; awareness of body language; accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation; handling conflict.

Suggested reading:

- Effective Communication: Perspectives, Principles and Practices (4th edition) by R. Blundel, K. Ippolito, and D Donnarumma (2008). ISBN 9780273713753.
- Principles of Marketing (15th edition) by P. Kotler et al. (2013). ISBN-13: 978-0273786993.
- The Presentation Book: How to Create It, Shape It and Deliver It! by E. Ledden (2013). ISBN-13: 978-1292002583.

- Management and Organisational Behaviour (9th edition) by L. Mullins (2010). ISBN-13: 978-0273728610.
- Business Communications, Biz/ed website. Available from:
<http://www.bized.co.uk/educators/level2/comms/activity/buscomms12.htm>.
- Communication Barriers, Tutor2u website. Available at:
http://www.tutor2u.net/business/people/communication_barriers.asp.
- Communication Models , Tutorials Point website. Available at:
http://www.tutorialspoint.com/management_concepts/communication_models.htm.

3UBF Understanding business finance

Unit title: Understanding business finance

ABE unit code: 3UBF

Unit Reference Number: A/506/4458

Unit level: QCF Level 3

Credit value: 9 credits

Guided learning hours: 28

Unit review date: 31 August 2016

Purpose and aim of unit:

This unit will develop the learner's understanding of different internal and external sources of business finance and the use of financial data. The unit will cover how financial data can be used to evaluate business performance and support decision-making within the business. Skills in interpreting and using financial information will be also developed.

This unit is suitable for persons who are seeking to:

- develop a career in business
- develop their knowledge, skills and competence in business studies
- further develop their knowledge and skills in business finance.

Assessment method:

This unit will be assessed by a written examination, which will be set and marked by ABE.

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>
1 Understand the features of different sources of business finance	1.1 Describe different sources of business finance 1.2 Assess the relative merits of different sources of business finance
2 Be able to use financial statements to interpret business performance	2.1 Analyse financial statements 2.2 Assess the financial performance of a business using appropriate comparative data
3 Know how to use financial information to support short and medium term decision-making in a business	3.1 Explain the purpose and limitations of operating and cash budgets 3.2 Classify and use cost information to support short and medium term decision-making in a business

Indicative content:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the features of different sources of business finance

Sources of business finance

Short, medium and long term sources, for example:

- External sources, e.g. share capital; loan capital; convertibles; leases; overdrafts; factoring.
- Internal sources, e.g. retained profit; the sales of assets; utilising working capital more effectively.
- Providers of external finance, e.g. financial markets, banks, venture capitalists, grants from governments.

Merits

Cost; timing; risk; use; taxation; security; repayment etc.

Learning Outcome 2: Be able to use financial statements to interpret business performance

Financial statements

Statements of income; financial position and cash flow; financial statements of different organisations, e.g. companies, sole traders, partnerships etc.

Financial performance

Key accounting ratios for profitability, liquidity, efficiency and investment.

Comparative data

For another company in the same industry; against previous periods, budgets or forecasts.

Learning Outcome 3: Know how to use financial information to support short and medium term decision-making in a business

Purpose and limitations

Budgets and corporate objectives; the use of budgets for control; behavioural issues and the limitations of budgets as a control tool.

Operating and cash budgets

Preparation of operating and cash budgets; preparation of operating statements.

Cost information

Cost behaviour, i.e. fixed, variable, stepped, semi-variable; and how they are ascertained.

Decision making

Contribution and break even analysis, including: margin of safety; profit-volume; PV charts; marginal analysis; weaknesses of break-even.

Suggested reading:

- Accounting and Finance for Non-Specialists (7th Edition) by P. Atrill and E. McLaney (2010). ISBN-13: 978-0273745969.
- Accounts Demystified: The Astonishingly Simple Guide to Accounting (6th edition) by A. Rice (2011). ISBN-13: 978-0273744702.
- Finance for Non-Financial Managers by G. Siciliano (2003). ISBN-13: 978-0071413770.
- Finance Basics by S. Warner (2010). ISBN-13: 978-0007328093.

- Business Finance Explained, UK Government website. Available at: www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder.
- Business Finance Support Finder, UK Government website. Available at: www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder.
- Charity Commission website. Available at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk.
- Annual reports of selected companies, agencies and sole traders, available to view on many company websites.

Unit title: Understanding and using IT for business

ABE unit code: 3UIT

Unit Reference Number: J/506/4463

Unit level: QCF Level 3

Credit value: 9 credits

Guided learning hours: 28

Unit review date: 31 August 2016

Purpose and aim of unit:

This unit provides an introduction to the components of information technology (IT) systems commonly found in business environments and the main uses of IT in business. It will support learners in developing their understanding of how to use IT to assist with business problems. The main legal and ethical considerations relevant to the effective use of IT in the business context will also be addressed.

This unit is suitable for persons who are seeking to:

- develop a career in business
- develop their knowledge, skills and competence in business studies
- further develop their knowledge and skills in information technology within a business context.

Assessment method:

This unit will be assessed by a written examination, which will be set and marked by ABE.

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>
1 Understand the main components of a business IT system	1.1 Evaluate different hardware and software systems for business 1.2 Describe the main components of a business IT system
2 Understand the main business uses of IT	2.1 Explain the main uses of IT in business 2.2 Assess how the IT system fits in the organisation
3 Know how to use business IT systems in a business environment	3.1 Evaluate IT solutions for a business problem 3.2 Discuss the main legal, ethical and professional issues relevant to the use of IT in business

Indicative content:

Learning Outcome 1: Understand the main components of a business IT system

Different hardware and software systems:

- Types of system, e.g. Apple; PC; tablet; smartphone.
- Physical devices, e.g. Laptops; servers; desktops; tablets.
- Operating systems, e.g. OSX; Windows desktop; Windows server; Android; Chrome OS; UNIX/Linux.
- Command Line Interface (CLI) and Graphical User Interface (GUI).
- Applications software, e.g. word processing; spreadsheets; databases; graphical software.

Main components

For example:

- Hardware, e.g. RAM; ROM; memory; processors; disc drives; USB systems.
- Input and output devices.
- Peripherals, e.g. monitors; keyboards.
- Operating systems, e.g. OSX; Windows; Android; Chrome OS.
- Networks, including: wireless, wired, devices (router, switch, access point, firewall); Cloud based systems; cabling and connections; advantages/disadvantages.
- Software: typical business software, e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, databases and graphical software; specialist software, e.g. property management systems.

Learning Outcome 2: Understand the main business uses of IT

Main uses

For example: word processing; communication; information storage and retrieval; data analysis and manipulation; production of accounts.

IT system

Considerations include how the IT system fits in with other automated systems, manual systems and business/regulatory/statutory processes.

Learning Outcome 3: Know how to use business IT systems in a business environment

IT solutions

Producing a problem specification; analysing the problem; gathering required information; determining requirements; noting assumptions and constraints; identifying and assessing the various alternate methods of solving the problem; recommending an effective solution.

Main legal, ethical and professional issues in IT:

- Major IT laws; data privacy; computer misuse; health and safety.
- Ethical and social implication of emerging technologies; main ethical considerations, e.g. handling data in an ethical manner, respecting privacy of data and data subject.
- Acceptable use of IT; fair use of IT.
- Professional issues in IT; professional behaviour; acting in the best interests of the client.

Suggested reading:

- Information Technology in a Global Society for the IB Diploma (Black and White Edition) by S. Gray (2011). ISBN-13: 978-1468023619.

- Technology in Action, Introductory (10th edition) by A. Evans, M. Kendall, and M.A. Poatsy, ISBN-13: 9780133141023.
- Practical Computing (3rd edition) by L. Hogan and A.M. Rutledge (2012). ISBN-13: 9780132839969.
- Essential Guide to Computing: The Story of Information Technology by E. Garrison Walters (2010). ISBN-13: 9780130194695.

Other resources:

- Computer Misuse Act 1990, UK Government. Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/18/contents>.
- Working with Display Screen Equipment (PDF), Health and Safety Executive. Available from: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>.
- Data Protection Guide, Information Commissioners Officer. Available from: http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/data_protection/the_guide.
- Essentials of Health and Safety at Work (PDF), HSE. Available from: <http://www.sh168.org.tw/getRef.ashx?id=174>.