



Above, employees on a production line in a Toyota factory in China. Below left, Aer Lingus is a good example of a company that has cut its costs using new technologies by replacing reservation staff with an online booking system. Photographs: AP, Thomas Engstrom/Bloomberg News

Suggested study plan

Remember, that before you start a new topic, revise what you have previously studied. Try questions from each topic from the past papers and your book. Time yourself doing questions to ensure that you get them done in the time available. Practise an ABQ every week.

You can see from the study plan that I recommend starting with the material that will be examined in the ABQ (units five, six and seven). This is because the ABQ is a compulsory 20 per cent question and you have no choice when answering it. This material may also account for a number of questions in section three and some short questions in section one. Therefore, it is vital that you know units five, six and seven inside out. Starting with these gives you the maximum time to revise the most important material. If you have not started studying, start with this material.

Week ending	Topics to cover	2008 ABQ material
March 9th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ideas for new products/services ◆ Development process of new product/service ◆ Business start up – ownership, production and finance ◆ Business plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes Yes Yes
March 16th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economy and business ◆ Government and business ◆ Community development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes Yes
March 23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes
March 30th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Business expansion ◆ Business organisations ◆ Business ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes Yes
April 6th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ International trade (selected topics covered later in this article) ◆ Global business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes
April 13th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ EU ◆ People in business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes
April 20th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consumer laws ◆ Employee laws 	
April 27th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enterprise ◆ Management ◆ Communicating 	
May 4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Leading and motivating ◆ Management activities 	
May 11th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ HRM ◆ Change (selected topics covered later in this article) 	
May 18th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Accounting Ratios ◆ Insurance 	
May 25th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Taxation ◆ Finance 	

Making the most out of your mocks

Before the mocks

Familiarise yourself with the layout of the paper and know the marking scheme. This will help you to maximise your grade, no matter how much or how little business you know.

Section one accounts for 20 per cent of the paper. It consists of 10 questions from which you must answer any eight. The questions can come from any part of the course.

To achieve top marks, you must write two points in every answer (eg a definition and an advantage).

For an example, see 1999 Higher Section 1 Question 7 in the adjacent article.

Section 2 is the Applied Business Question (ABQ). It, too, comprises 20 per cent of the exam. You are asked three questions about a story of a fictional business.

You must answer all three questions (no choice). The questions will come from units five, six and seven of the course. To get top marks, divide the marks by five to get the number of points to write. Then, state and explain each point and, most importantly, back each point up with a relevant quote from the story.

Section three (divided into two parts) consists of seven long questions. The three questions in part one will come from units one, six and seven of the course.

The four in part two come from units two, three, four and five. You must answer four of these questions – one from part one, two from part two and any one other question from either part. To maximise your grade, divide the marks by five to get the required number of points. Then state and explain each point.

Make sure you elaborate in your explanation by writing a number of sentences.

During the mocks

Start with section one. You write your answers on the exam paper in the spaces provided.

You have roughly four minutes to spend on each of the eight questions you must answer.

Think carefully before

putting pen to paper. Then write the two best things that you can say on the topic (definition and one other point).

Tackle the ABQ next. You have roughly 36 minutes to do it.

Read the questions first, not the story. This will help you to spot what is important in the story. Make sure that you give a relevant quote in every single point you make (see the 2003 ABQ later in this article).

Highlight your quotes to make them stick out to the examiner.

Aim to answer your four long questions in roughly 25 minutes each. Make sure you explain your points thoroughly.

If asked to “illustrate”, give a fully explained example. If asked to “evaluate”, give your own opinion. See the 2001 Higher Level Question 3 (c) in this article.

The following table provides a rough guide as to how long you should spend at each part of the paper.

◆ Read over the paper at the start – five minutes.

◆ Section two: short questions – 30 minutes; ABQ – 36 minutes.

◆ Section three: long questions – 25 minutes each.

◆ Read over your answers at the end – five minutes.

After the mocks

The purpose of the mock is to learn from your mistakes, so that you do not make them in the real exam in June.

If you ran out of time in the mock, learn from this and make sure you stick rigidly to the time limit for each question as outlined earlier.

When you get your corrected script back, look through it carefully. Look at the marks you got for each part of every question. If you did not get full marks, figure out why (didn't write enough points, didn't explain in enough detail, didn't quote enough in ABQ, didn't know enough?) and take steps to rectify this.

There is plenty of time left until June, and learning from your mistakes will help you to seriously improve your grade.