

1. Vision Statement

Our A-Level Business curriculum is designed to transform students into **strategic thinkers** and **future leaders**. We aim to move beyond basic operational knowledge to foster a deep understanding of how managers and leaders navigate complex, global organizations. Our goal is to equip students with the analytical rigour to critique corporate strategy and the evaluative skill to justify high-stakes decisions in a volatile economic landscape.

2. Core Pillars of the Curriculum

The curriculum is built around three central pillars that mirror the AQA "Business Lab" approach:

Pillar	Strategic Focus	Curricular Intent
Tactical Management	Functional Areas (Units 1-6)	Units 1–6 represent the functional foundation of a business, focusing on how managers coordinate day-to-day operations to achieve specific goals. This section transitions from the role of leaders and managers (Units 1–2) to the tactical "levers" of a business: Marketing, Operations, Finance, and Human Resources (Units 3–6). The emphasis is on how these four departments must align their short-term decisions to improve competitiveness, efficiency, and financial health.
Strategic Positioning	The Business Environment (Units 7-8)	Units 7 and 8 shift the focus from internal departments to the "Strategic Position" of the business, evaluating how it stands against competitors and the external environment. Students learn to use analytical tools like SWOT analysis and Porter's Five Forces to identify strengths and threats, alongside financial and non-financial metrics to assess overall health. The core intent is for students to judge a business's current performance and competitiveness before any major strategic changes are made.
Strategic Direction	Growth and Change (Units 9-10)	Units 9 and 10 represent the final stage of the AQA A-level, focusing on Strategic Direction and how businesses manage the complexities of large-scale change. Students evaluate the "big decisions" regarding which markets to enter and which products to develop using models like Ansoff's Matrix , while also assessing the risks of Internationalisation and Digital Transformation . The curriculum concludes by analysing how a business can successfully implement these strategies by managing organizational culture and overcoming resistance to change.

3. Disciplinary Knowledge (The AQA Skills)

We focus on the mastery of the three Assessment Objectives, scaled for the rigour of A-Level:

- **AO1 (Knowledge):** This is the foundation: the ability to accurately define and recall business terms, models, and theories. Not just "knowing" a term, but understanding the theory behind complex models and terms.
- **AO2 (Application):** This is the ability to "anchor" theory to the specific case study provided in the exam. Contextualization. Using the specific data, market conditions, or financial history of the business in the text.
- **AO3 (Analysis):** The "chain of reasoning" that explains the consequences of a business decision. Logical progression. Building a step-by-step argument: "If X happens, then Y occurs, which ultimately leads to Z."

- **AO4 (Evaluation):** This is the highest-level skill: making a supported, nuanced judgment. Synthesis and Recommendation. Deciding "to what extent" a strategy is the right move.

4. Sequence and Coherence

Our curriculum follows a **linear, spiral structure**:

- **Year 12 –**

Tactical Management (Leadership and Decision Making Units 1 & 2): How functional managers make decisions to improve day-to-day performance. We focus on the role of managers and the four functional areas. This provides the "toolbox" of knowledge.

The Functional Levers - Marketing & Operations (Units 3 & 4): Once leadership is understood, we look at the two most "visible" departments.

The Supporting Functions - Finance & HR (Units 5 & 6): We conclude Year 12 by looking at the "internal" engines of the business.

- **Year 13**

Strategic Position (Units 7 and 8): shift from "Functional" to "Strategic." We stop looking at departments in isolation and start looking at the business as a whole. Students learn to evaluate a firm's health using **Ratio Analysis** and their external standing using **Porter's Five Forces**. *"Where are we now, and can we afford to move?"*

Strategic Direction & Methods (Unit 9): Now that we know the "Position," we decide on the "Direction." We explore how businesses grow. This is the "big thinking" unit—covering **Ansoff's Matrix, Internationalisation, and Innovation**. Evaluating the risk of moving from a "safe" domestic market to a "volatile" global one.

Strategic Change (Unit 10): The "capstone" for the entire A-Level. Strategy is useless if you cannot implement it. We look at **Organisational Culture, Strategic Drift, and Force Field Analysis**. To understand why some massive corporations (like Kodak or Nokia) fail to adapt even when they have a strategy in place.

The Synoptic Goal: By following this sequence, students are prepared for the unique challenge of **AQA Paper 3**, which is a single, massive case study covering all 10 units. **Year 12** provides the "Depth" (the technical, functional details). **Year 13** provides the "Breadth" (the ability to see how one decision impacts the whole company).

Throughout Year 13, constantly "Spiral Back" to Year 12. For example, when teaching **Unit 9 (Internationalisation)**, ask: *"How would this move to a new country impact our Unit 4 (Operations) and our Unit 6 (HR) recruitment strategy?"*

5. Addressing Disadvantage and Inclusion

We are committed to removing the barriers to "powerful knowledge" for all students:

- **Vocabulary Instruction:** We utilize **Frayer Models** and **Dual Coding** to demystify complex strategic models, ensuring students with lower prior attainment or EAL needs can access the highest marks.
- **Scaffolding the "Blank Page":** We provide structured essay frameworks (such as **AJIM: Answer, Justify, It depends on, Most important factor**) to support students in organizing complex evaluative thoughts.

- **Building Social Capital:** We bridge the experience gap by integrating real-world corporate news (e.g., *Financial Times* or *Economist* analysis) into every lesson, ensuring students from all backgrounds can speak the language of the boardroom.

6. Impact and Aspirations

The impact of our curriculum extends beyond the AQA exams. We aim to produce students who are:

- **Financially Literate:** Capable of interpreting complex accounts and investment appraisals.
- **Ethically Aware:** Able to critique the social and environmental impact of corporate decisions.
- **Career Ready:** Possessing the critical thinking and professional communication skills required for undergraduate study and high-level degree apprenticeships.