BUSINESS STUDIES
ADVANCED LEVEL

OBJECTIVES
1. To provide a basic knowledge of the business environment and business activities in Hong Kong.
2. To develop an understanding of the integrated and changing nature of modern business problems.
3. To develop skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation in the context of business decisions.

THE EXAMINATION
The examination will consist of two papers of 3 hours each.
Paper 1 (50%) – This paper will consist of
   (a) short questions to test basic concepts and knowledge; and
   (b) questions on case studies to test comprehension and application of knowledge.
Paper 2 (50%) – This paper will consist of essay questions. It will give candidates an opportunity to deal in depth with the topics
   of the syllabus.
The content of the syllabus will be tested in both papers.

THE SYLLABUS

SYLLABUS

Section 1 Business in the Hong Kong economy

Definitions of business

The role of business in Hong Kong economy (i) Production of goods and services
SYLLABUS

(ii) Provision of employment opportunities
(iii) Improvement of living standards, etc.

The industrial structure in Hong Kong and its particular characteristics
(i) Lack of primary industries, concentration on secondary and tertiary industries
(ii) Scope and development of the service sector

The factors affecting Hong Kong's international trade
(i) The risks of operating a business in Hong Kong
(ii) Its dependence on international trade
(iii) The susceptibility of Hong Kong business to world economic and political conditions

Legal considerations
(i) The effects of international legislation on Hong Kong business
(ii) Effects of local legislation on Hong Kong business: employee protection and consumer protection

Business and government relations
Government authorities which exist to assist and control business operations, trade and industry

Business ethics and social responsibilities
(i) The relationship of business organization to the community
(ii) The business response to environmental pollution problems

Section 2 Forms of business ownership and their objectives

The formation and characteristics of different forms of business ownership: sole trader, partnership and limited company
(i) Objectives of each form
(ii) Procedures for formation
(iii) Advantages and disadvantages
SYLLABUS

Other forms of business ownership

Cooperatives, joint-venture, franchise and public enterprise

The problems of setting up a business organization

(i) Internal e.g. factors of production
(ii) External e.g. political and government restrictions, market environment

The challenge of small business

(i) Reasons for survival and failure
(ii) Its economic roles and contributions

Multi-national firms

(i) Definition
(ii) Characteristics

Section 3 Management and operating functions within firms to achieve objectives

Management

Functions of management

(i) Definition of management
(ii) Basic understanding of planning, organizing, staffing, co-ordinating, leading, controlling and decision making

Means to effective management

e.g. Division of work, subordinating individual goals, encouraging individual effort, balancing responsibility with authority, and developing team spirit

Types of formal organizational structure and control

(i) Line, staff, line and staff
(ii) Departmentalization
(iii) Centralization and decentralization
SYLLABUS

The need for effective communication

(i) Means of communication
(ii) Importance of vertical/horizontal communication
(iii) Ways to overcome communication barriers

(iv) Span of control

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Human Resource Management

The importance of manpower

Its significance in achieving company objectives

Functions of human resource management

(i) Job analysis which includes job description and job specification
(ii) Manpower planning
(iii) Recruitment, selection, placement and orientation
(iv) Training and education programmes
(v) Evaluation: performance appraisal, transfer, promotion and discharge
(vi) Compensation: remuneration and fringe benefits
(vii) Maintenance: employee health and safety, morale, absenteeism and turnover

Factors influencing motivation, morale and productivity

(i) Basic understanding of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg’s Dual-factor Theory
(ii) Basic understanding of McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y
(iii) Financial and non-financial rewards

Industrial relations

(i) Framework of industrial relations system: factors affecting the
Financial Management

Sources of capital
(i) Short term capital
(ii) Long term capital
(iii) Factors affecting choice of the above

Financial markets
(i) Primary and secondary markets
(ii) Capital and money markets

The nature of financial statements
Basic understanding of financial statements: balance sheets and income statements (study of basic bookkeeping is not required)

The nature and significance of key financial ratios
Types of financial ratios: liquidity, profitability, activity, leverage and equity ratios

Current assets management
(i) Cash flow and its importance
(ii) Stock control
(iii) Debtors management

Capital budgeting
(i) The concept of discounted cash flow
(ii) Methods, their advantages and disadvantages: NPV, IRR, average rate of returns, payback method
The use of budgets for management guidance

Revenue and cost
(i) Capital and revenue
(ii) Fixed and variable costs
(iii) Linear breakeven analysis and its limitations

Operations Management

Production processes
(i) Production concepts
(ii) Types: extractive, analytic, fabricating, synthetic, assembling

Product innovation/development
Steps in product innovation/development

Operations systems (manufacturing and service industries)
(i) Manufacturing processes: standard and custom production, continuous and intermittent production
(ii) Production planning and control
(iii) Materials management: purchasing, storage, stock control (simple calculation of EOQ is required)
(iv) Concept of quality in manufacturing and service industries
(v) Basic concepts of Total Quality Management and Re-engineering (details of implementation are not required)

Mass production
(i) Characteristics: mechanization, specialization of labour, standardization, and automation
(ii) Advantages and disadvantages
(iii) Favourable factors that make mass production possible
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<tr>
<td>The marketing concept</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>The role of marketing</td>
<td>Planning, organizing, implementing and controlling marketing activities for goods and services</td>
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| Marketing research | (i) Process of marketing research  
(ii) The role of marketing research |
| Buyer behaviour | (i) Factors affecting consumer buying behaviour  
(ii) Factors affecting industrial buying behaviour |
| Marketing strategy for goods and services | (i) Selecting and analyzing target markets  
(ii) Developing a marketing mix: product/service, channels of distribution, price and non-price competition, promotion  
(iii) Applying various marketing mix strategies for different stages of the product life cycle  
(iv) Basic concepts of relationship marketing |
| Consumerism | Rights, complaints and responses |
| International marketing | (i) Environmental forces in international markets  
(ii) Adaptations versus standardization of international marketing mixes  
(iii) Methods of developing international marketing involvement |
Risk Management

General features of business risks
(i) Types of business risks
(ii) Risk management: risk identification, evaluation, measurement and treatment, programme of implementation
(iii) Instruments for risk reduction: futures and options

Insurance
(i) Principles
(ii) Functions
(iii) Types of insurance protection: life, property, liability, marine and credit insurance

Business Information

The importance and use of information in business
(i) The significance and usefulness of business information
(ii) Basic understanding of the importance of information systems in business

Statistical data in business
(i) Application of the arithmetic mean, mode and median
(ii) Interpretation of tables, graphs, histograms, bar charts and pie charts
(iii) Basic understanding of trend interpretation

The role of information technology in business
(i) Its applications
(ii) Advantages and disadvantages