

# External assessment

Three different methods are used to assess students.

- Analytic markschemes
- Markbands
- Assessment criteria (for paper 1 and paper 2 extended response questions)

For both examination papers, there are analytic markschemes, markbands and assessment criteria.

The markbands and assessment criteria are related to the assessment objectives established for the business management course and the individuals and societies grade descriptors, and are published in this guide. The analytic markschemes are specific to each examination and are published separately in a markscheme document.

## Written papers

The external assessment of the Diploma Programme business management course consists of two examination papers at SL and at HL that are externally set and externally marked. They are designed to allow students to demonstrate their competencies in relation to the business management assessment objectives. All questions on the examination papers are based on specifications in this guide.

The external components contribute 75% to the final assessment at both SL and HL.

In common with all Diploma Programme examination papers, students at SL and HL are given five minutes of reading time before they begin answering the papers.

### Pre-seen case study (paper 1)

- The pre-seen case study is provided by the IB three months before the examination session. The pre-seen case study describes a fictitious case study organization and its business situation. Teachers are advised to spend no more than three weeks on the pre-seen case study. The teacher support material gives further guidance on appropriate preparatory work with the pre-seen case study. Section A questions of paper 1 are based on the pre-seen case study.
- The pre-seen case study is the same for SL and HL students, although different questions could be set for each level.
- Additional stimulus material is provided on the day of the examination, giving students more information on the situation of the case study organization and decisions it is facing. Section B and section C (HL only) questions of paper 1 are primarily based on the additional stimulus material, although students are expected to draw on the pre-seen material where relevant. The additional stimulus material may be the same as, similar to, or different for SL and HL students, and some additional stimulus material is given for HL students only.
- The purpose of the pre-seen case study is to assess, in depth and across a number of topics, the students' ability to apply business management knowledge to a given situation.

## Command terms

Teachers and students must be familiar with the command terms used at each assessment objective level to understand the depth of treatment required in examination questions. Cognitive demands progress from AO1 to AO3, while AO4 terms are specific to particular skills.

Examination questions may use any command term from the assessment objective level specified in the “Syllabus content” section or a less demanding command term from a lower level. For example, if the assessment objective level for a topic is AO2, an examination question could contain any of the command terms for AO2, such as “explain”, “distinguish”, “interpret” and so forth. Alternatively, the examination question could contain a command term from AO1, such as “describe”. However, a more demanding command term, such as “evaluate”, from a higher level (AO3 in this case), cannot be used.

The command terms used in each question or part thereof indicate the depth required. The command terms are organized by assessment objective level in the “Assessment objectives” section earlier in the guide and defined in the “Glossary of command terms” in the appendix.

## Use of examples and case studies

In order to be awarded marks in the higher markbands and levels of assessment criteria, students are expected, where appropriate, to refer to the stimulus material provided in examinations, use case studies and illustrate their answers with examples. This way, they highlight their understanding of how business management tools, techniques and theories operate in practice. Where the stimulus material, case studies and examples are referred to, students should not simply state the information, but rather offer some explanation of how it relates to the question asked.

## Use of business management terms

Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to appropriately define, use and apply the business management terms included in the “Syllabus content” section.

## Use of calculators

While all questions requiring a calculator can be answered fully using a four-function (plus, minus, multiply, divide) calculator, graphic display calculators (GDCs) are allowed during the examination.

Teachers and schools **must** adhere to the regulations regarding the use of electronic calculators in examinations, and students must be made aware of these. This information can be found in the relevant section of the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

## External assessment details—SL

### Paper 1

**Duration:** 1 hour 15 minutes

**Weighting:** 30%

This paper is divided into two sections. Section A questions are based on the IB prescribed pre-seen case study issued to students three months before the examination. Section B questions are primarily based on the additional stimulus material given on the day of the examination, although students are expected to draw on the pre-seen material where relevant. Questions may be the same, similar or different for SL and HL students.

Students are expected to demonstrate the following assessment objectives.

Assessment objective	Section A	Section B
1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	X	X
2. Demonstrate application and analysis	X	X
3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation		X
4. Demonstrate a variety of appropriate skills	X	X

#### Section A

- Questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5 of the syllabus and refer to the prescribed pre-seen case study.
- Students answer two structured questions in total from a choice of three.
- The questions are each subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Each question is worth 10 marks.
- Section A is worth a total of 20 marks.

#### Section B

- The questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5 of the syllabus and are primarily based on the additional stimulus material given on the day of the examination.
- Students answer one compulsory structured question.
- The question is subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; and a variety of appropriate skills.

- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Section B is worth a total of 20 marks.

Marks are allocated using a combination of an analytic markscheme and markbands.

Overall, the maximum for paper 1 is 40 marks.

## Paper 2

**Duration: 1 hour and 45 minutes**

**Weighting: 45%**

This paper is divided into three sections. The structure of this paper is the same as HL paper 2. However, questions may be the same as, similar to, or different from, those used for the HL paper. SL students answer fewer questions.

Students are expected to demonstrate the following assessment objectives.

Assessment objective	Section A	Section B	Section C
1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	X	X	X
2. Demonstrate application and analysis	X	X	X
3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation		X	X
4. Demonstrate a variety of appropriate skills	X	X	X

### Section A

- The questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5.
- The questions have a quantitative focus.
- Students answer one structured question based on unseen stimulus material from a choice of two.
- The questions are subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; and a variety of appropriate skills
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Each question is worth 10 marks.
- Section A is worth a total of 10 marks.

### Section B

- The questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5 of the syllabus.
- Students answer one structured question based on unseen stimulus material from a choice of three.

- The question is subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Each question is worth 20 marks.
- Section B is worth a total of 20 marks.

For sections A and B, marks are allocated using a combination of an analytic markscheme and markbands.

### Section C

- The principal focus of questions in this section is on the concepts of change, culture, ethics, globalization, innovation and strategy that underpin the business management course.
- While the principal focus for each question is on two of the concepts, students need to draw on their knowledge of other relevant topics in the syllabus.
- There is no stimulus material provided for the questions.
- Students are required to address the question in relation to at least one real-world organization but may use information from a range of sources, which may include real-world case studies examined in class and IA research. The real-world organization that students use in their responses must not be the case study organization featured in paper 1.
- The response should consider the perspectives of individuals and societies on which the real-world organization impacts.
- Students answer one extended response question from a choice of three.
- Assessment objective level 3 (AO3) command terms are used in the questions.
- The questions require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- Each question is worth 20 marks.
- Section C is worth a total of 20 marks.

For section C, marks are allocated using assessment criteria. Marking notes included in the markscheme give additional guidance on how to apply the assessment criteria.

Overall, the maximum for paper 2 is 50 marks.

## External assessment details—HL

### Paper 1

**Duration:** 2 hours 15 minutes

**Weighting:** 35%

This paper is divided into three sections. Section A questions are based on the IB prescribed pre-seen case study issued to students three months before the examination. Section B and C questions are based mainly on the additional stimulus material given on the day of the examination, although students are expected to draw on the pre-seen material where relevant. Section A and section B questions may be the same, similar or different for SL and HL students.

Students are expected to demonstrate the following assessment objectives.

Assessment objective	Section A	Section B	Section C
1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	X	X	X
2. Demonstrate application and analysis	X	X	X
3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation		X	X
4. Demonstrate a variety of appropriate skills	X	X	X

### Section A

- Questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5, which could include the HL extension of the syllabus, and refer to the prescribed pre-seen case study.
- Students answer two structured questions in total from a choice of three.
- Each question is subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each question indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Each question is worth 10 marks.
- Section A is worth a total of 20 marks.

### Section B

- The questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5 and HL extension of the syllabus and are primarily based on the additional stimulus material given on the day of the examination.
- Students answer one compulsory structured question.
- The question is subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Section B question is worth a total of 20 marks.

For sections A and B, marks are allocated using a combination of an analytic markscheme and markbands.

## Section C

- The question in this section is drawn from units 1 to 5 and HL extension of the syllabus and is primarily based on the additional stimulus material given on the day of the examination.
- The response should consider the perspectives of individuals and societies that the organization in the prescribed case study impacts upon.
- Students answer one compulsory extended response question.
- Assessment objective level three (AO3) command terms are used in the questions.
- The questions require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- Each question is worth 20 marks.
- Section C is worth a total of 20 marks.

For section C, marks are allocated using assessment criteria. Marking notes included in the markscheme give additional guidance on how to apply the assessment criteria.

Overall, the maximum for paper 1 is 60 marks.

## Paper 2

**Duration: 2 hours 15 minutes**

**Weighting: 40%**

This paper is divided into three sections. The structure of this paper is the same as SL paper 2. However, questions may be the same as, similar to, or different from, those used for the SL paper. HL students answer more questions.

Students are expected to demonstrate the following assessment objectives.

Assessment objective	Section A	Section B	Section C
1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	X	X	X
2. Demonstrate application and analysis	X	X	X
3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation		X	X
4. Demonstrate a variety of appropriate skills	X	X	X

## Section A

- The questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5 and HL extension of the syllabus.
- The questions have a quantitative focus.
- Students answer one structured question based on unseen stimulus material from a choice of two.
- The question is subdivided into parts.

- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Each question is worth 10 marks.
- Section A is worth a total of 10 marks.

### **Section B**

- The questions in this section are drawn from units 1 to 5 and HL extension of the syllabus.
- Students answer two structured questions based on stimulus material from a choice of three.
- The questions are each subdivided into parts.
- The command terms used in each part indicate the depth required.
- The questions may require: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation and a variety of appropriate skills.
- The marks available for each part are indicated on the examination paper.
- Each question is worth 20 marks.
- Section B is worth a total of 40 marks.

For sections A and B, marks are allocated using a combination of an analytic markscheme and markbands.

### **Section C**

- The principal focus of questions in this section is on the concepts of change, culture, ethics, globalization, innovation and strategy that underpin the business management course.
- While the principal focus for each question is on two of the concepts, students need to draw on their knowledge of other relevant topics in the syllabus, including the HL extension.
- There is no stimulus material provided for the questions.
- Students are required to address the question in relation to one real-world organization but may use information from a range of sources, which may include real-world case studies examined in class and IA research. The real-world organization that students use in their response must not be the case study organization featured in paper 1.
- The response should consider the perspectives of individuals and societies upon which the real-world organization impacts.
- Students answer one extended response question from a choice of three.
- Assessment objective level 3 (AO3) command terms are used in each question.
- Each question requires: knowledge and understanding; application and analysis; synthesis and evaluation; and a variety of appropriate skills.
- Each question is worth 20 marks.
- Section C is worth a total of 20 marks.

For section C, marks are allocated using assessment criteria. Marking notes included in the markscheme give additional guidance on how to apply the assessment criteria.

Overall, the maximum for paper 2 is 70 marks.



## External assessment markbands—SL and HL

In addition to an analytic markscheme specific to the question paper, markbands are used to allocate marks in sections A and B for questions where a larger number of marks are available. Markbands are used in:

- paper 1 (SL/HL), sections A and B
- paper 2 (SL/HL), section B.

### SL and HL Paper 1, Section A

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little knowledge and understanding of relevant issues and business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories.</li> <li>• Little use of business management terminology.</li> <li>• Little reference to the stimulus material.</li> </ul>
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description or partial analysis of some relevant issues with some use of business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories.</li> <li>• Some use of appropriate terminology.</li> <li>• Some reference to the stimulus material that goes beyond the name of a person(s) and/or the name of the organization.</li> <li>• At the lower end of the markband, responses are mainly theoretical.</li> </ul>
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of the relevant issues with good use of business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories.</li> <li>• Use of appropriate terminology throughout the response.</li> <li>• Effective use of the stimulus material.</li> </ul>

### SL and HL Paper 1 and 2, Section B

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little understanding of the demands of the question.</li> <li>• Few business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories are explained or applied, and business management terminology is lacking.</li> <li>• Little reference to the stimulus material.</li> </ul>
3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some understanding of the demands of the question.</li> <li>• Some relevant business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories are explained or applied, and some appropriate terminology is used.</li> <li>• Some reference to the stimulus material but often not going beyond the name of a person(s) and/or the name of the organization.</li> </ul>

Marks	Level descriptor
5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of most of the demands of the question.</li> <li>• Relevant business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories are explained and applied, and appropriate terminology is used most of the time.</li> <li>• Some reference to the stimulus material that goes beyond the name of a person(s) and/or the name of the organization.</li> <li>• Some evidence of a balanced response.</li> <li>• Some judgments are relevant but not substantiated.</li> </ul>
7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good understanding of the demands of the question.</li> <li>• Relevant business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories are explained and applied well, and appropriate terminology is used.</li> <li>• Good reference to the stimulus material.</li> <li>• Good evidence of a balanced response.</li> <li>• The judgments are relevant but not always well substantiated.</li> </ul>
9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good understanding of the demands of the question, including implications, where relevant.</li> <li>• Relevant business management tools (where applicable), techniques and theories are explained clearly and applied purposefully, and appropriate terminology is used throughout the response.</li> <li>• Effective use of the stimulus material in a way that significantly strengthens the response.</li> <li>• Evidence of balance is consistent throughout the response.</li> <li>• The judgments are relevant and well substantiated.</li> </ul>

## External assessment criteria—SL and HL

Assessment criteria are used to allocate marks for extended response questions in:

- HL paper 1, section C
- SL paper 2, section C
- HL paper 2, section C.

### HL paper 1, section C

There are five assessment criteria for this question type.

- Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of tools, techniques and theories
- Criterion B: Application
- Criterion C: Reasoned arguments
- Criterion D: Structure
- Criterion E: Individual and societies.

**Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of tools, techniques and theories**

This criterion addresses the extent to which the student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of relevant business management tools, techniques and theories as stated and/or implied by the question. This includes using appropriate business management terminology.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Superficial knowledge of relevant tools, techniques and theory is demonstrated.
2	Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of relevant tools, techniques and theories is demonstrated.
3	Good knowledge and understanding of relevant tools, techniques and theories is generally demonstrated, though the explanation may lack some depth or breadth.
4	Good knowledge and understanding of relevant tools, techniques and theories is demonstrated.

**Criterion B: Application**

This criterion addresses the extent to which the student is able to apply the relevant business management tools, techniques and theories to the case study organization.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The relevant business management tools, techniques and theories are connected to the case study organization, but this connection is inappropriate or superficial.
2	The relevant business management tools, techniques and theories are appropriately connected to the case study organization, but this connection is not developed.
3	The relevant business management tools, techniques and theories are generally well applied to explain the situation and issues of the case study organization, though the explanation may lack some depth or breadth. Examples are provided.
4	The relevant business management tools, techniques and theories are well applied to explain the situation and issues of the case study organization. Examples are appropriate and illustrative.

### Criterion C: Reasoned arguments

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student makes reasoned arguments. This includes making relevant and balanced arguments by, for example, exploring different practices, weighing up their strengths and weaknesses, comparing and contrasting them or considering their implications, depending on the requirements of the question. It also includes justifying the arguments by presenting evidence for the claims made.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Statements are made but these are superficial.
2	Relevant arguments are made but these are mostly unjustified.
3	Relevant arguments are made and these are mostly justified.
4	Relevant, balanced arguments are made and these are well justified.

### Criterion D: Structure

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student organizes his or her ideas with clarity, and presents a structured piece of writing comprised of:

- an introduction
- a body
- a conclusion
- fit-for-purpose paragraphs.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Two or fewer of the structural elements are present, and few ideas are clearly organized.
2	Three of the structural elements are present, or most ideas are clearly organized.
3	Three or four of the structural elements are present, and most ideas are clearly organized.
4	All of the structural elements are present, and ideas are clearly organized.

**Criterion E: Individuals and societies**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student is able to give balanced consideration to the perspectives of a range of relevant stakeholders, including individuals and groups internal and external to the organization.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	One individual or group perspective is considered superficially or inappropriately.
2	One relevant individual or group perspective is considered appropriately, or two relevant individual or group perspectives are considered superficially or inappropriately.
3	At least two relevant individual or group perspectives are considered appropriately.
4	Balanced consideration is given to relevant individual and group perspectives.

**SL and HL paper 2, section C**

There are five assessment criteria for this question type.

- Criterion A: Knowledge and conceptual understanding
- Criterion B: Application
- Criterion C: Reasoned arguments
- Criterion D: Structure
- Criterion E: Individuals and societies

**Criterion A: Knowledge and conceptual understanding**

This criterion addresses the extent to which the student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the given concepts and relevant business management content (theories, techniques or tools, depending on the requirements of the question).

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Superficial knowledge of the given concepts is demonstrated. Business management content is not selected or the content selected is irrelevant.
2	Satisfactory understanding of one or both of the given concepts is demonstrated. Some business management content selected is relevant. The relevant content is satisfactorily explained.
3	Good understanding of one or both of the given concepts is demonstrated. The business management content selected is relevant, though it may not be sufficient. The relevant content is generally well explained, though the explanation may lack some depth or breadth.
4	Good understanding of both of the given concepts is demonstrated. The business management content selected is relevant, sufficient and well explained.

**Criterion B: Application**

This criterion addresses the extent to which the student is able to apply the given concepts and the relevant business management content (theories, techniques or tools, depending on the requirements of the question) to his or her chosen real-world organization(s). **The real-world organization(s) must not be the organization featured in the prescribed case study for paper 1.**

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The given concepts and/or any relevant business management content are connected to the real-world organization(s), but this connection is inappropriate or superficial.
2	The given concepts and/or relevant business management content are connected appropriately to the real-world organization(s), but this connection is not developed.
3	The given concepts and relevant business management content are generally well applied to explain the situation and issues of the real-world organization(s), though the explanation may lack some depth or breadth. Examples are provided.
4	The given concepts and relevant business management content are well applied to explain the situation and issues of the real-world organization(s). Examples are appropriate and illustrative.

### Criterion C: Reasoned arguments

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student makes reasoned arguments. This includes making relevant and balanced arguments by, for example, exploring different practices, weighing up their strengths and weaknesses, comparing and contrasting them or considering their implications, depending on the requirements of the question. It also includes justifying the arguments by presenting reasonable evidence or other support for the claims made.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Statements are made but these are superficial.
2	Relevant arguments are made but these are mostly unjustified.
3	Relevant arguments are made and these are mostly justified.
4	Relevant, balanced arguments are made and these are well justified.

**Criterion D: Structure**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student organizes his or her ideas with clarity, and presents a structured piece of writing comprised of:

- an introduction
- a body
- a conclusion
- fit-for-purpose paragraphs.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Two or fewer of the structural elements are present, and few ideas are clearly organized.
2	Three of the structural elements are present, or most ideas are clearly organized.
3	Three or four of the structural elements are present, and most ideas are clearly organized.
4	All of the structural elements are present, and ideas are clearly organized.

**Criterion E: Individuals and societies**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student is able to give balanced consideration to the perspectives of a range of relevant stakeholders, including individuals and groups internal and external to the organization.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	One individual or group perspective is considered superficially or inappropriately.
2	One relevant individual or group perspective is considered appropriately, or two relevant individual or group perspectives are considered superficially or inappropriately.
3	At least two relevant individual or group perspectives are considered appropriately.
4	Balanced consideration is given to relevant individual and group perspectives.

Please see marking notes in markschemes for further support in assessing these questions.